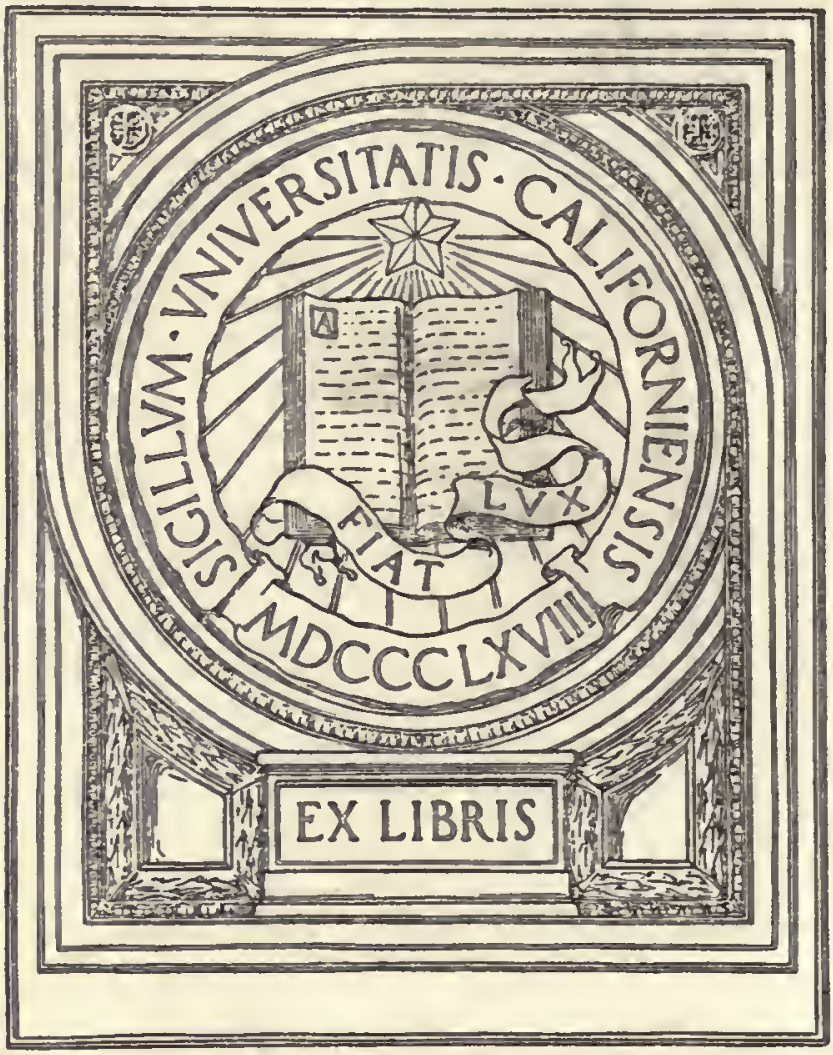

Almond Eyes

THE GREAT AGITATOR


ALMOND EYED
CAPITAL
WASH HOUSE
BOOTS AND SHOES
A STORY OF THE DAY
BY
Atwell Whitney.
"NOT THAT I LOVE CAESAR LESS, BUT ROME MORE"

ALMOND-EYED.

A STORY OF THE DAY.

BY

ATWELL WHITNEY.

WITH SEVENTEEN FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Not that I loved Cæsar less, but that I loved Rome more."

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR BY
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PREFACE.

I would not apologize for my work, but simply use that right which all authors have, of starting the reader with correct notions of the spirit and intention of the writer.

Firstly, being a firm believer in the grand old doctrines of Christianity, I would disclaim any intention of ridiculing religion, but rather those who make of it a farce.

Secondly, my desire is merely to present a vexing problem in the simplest manner possible; therefore, I have not burdened these pages with statistics, which are always misleading; nor have I dressed the problem in its holiday attire, ready for an airing in the presence of Senators and men of legal lore; but have left it in its every-day dress, for those who wear such garments to examine it.

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CHAPTER I.

CELESTIAL VISITANTS.

THERE was considerable excitement among the religiously-inclined in Yarbtown, for they were in a few days to receive their first importation of Celestial beings; not the angel visitations so often prayed for by them in their earnest prayer-meetings, but the almond-eyed, flat-nosed Celestials from over the seas of their own sin-cursed world.

Why Yarbtown had been so fortunate as to remain so long as it had free from actual habitation by the Chinese is easily explained. One of the old Mexican ranchos being for sale, and offering extra inducements for a colony of hard-working men, a number of young farmers, with likewise a fair sprinkling of staid old plowmen, gathered up their household goods, joined to themselves a schoolmaster and minister, and journeying to the Land of Gold, planted themselves and their crops on this promising ranch.

A goodly town, savoring somewhat of New England in its cosy cottages and intelligent residenters, soon sprung into existence. Not merely a home for the farmers was

it, but as time went by the town began gradually to advance in manufacturing interests. A starch-factory of fair proportions enlivened the main street, and the nucleus of a prospective manufactory of brooms was started. Indeed, the town of Yarbtown bade fair to bring wealth and happiness to the honest ranchers of its immediate neighborhood.

Here was a home market for their potatoes; here was an incentive given to plant their fair fields and trust to the God of the harvest for prosperity. Young in its growth, it was yet occupied by few others than the sturdy, willing men and women who had given their time and money to its development.

There had been small inducement offered to the mongrel herd of Chinese who flooded even fairer portions of the State. There were plenty to cultivate the soil, plenty to turn the potatoes into starch, plenty to do the marketing, willing daughters to do the neighborhood household work, and a number of sad-hearted widows to earn their scanty-enough living at the wash-tub and ironing-board.

One morning, however, the outliving farmers, as they came into town with their produce, rubbed their eyes in amazement to see, in front of several dilapidated sheds, the lobster-signs of "Ling Poo, Washing and Ironing," "Lee Chung, Chinese Doctor," and a jabbering crowd of the "foreign citizens" themselves, arranging excitedly for their residence among them.

I said the farmers were amazed; they were not displeased—good, simple souls—for they were not worldly-wise nor hard-hearted. They considered, too, the amount of work of which these busy hands would relieve them.

Here, too, were more mouths to feed with their produce; therefore, they received them with open arms, and even assisted them in arranging homes for themselves and settling comfortably among them. As though the locust needed assistance in scenting the grain-fields, or the buzzard the carrion!

Thus, Yarbtown placed itself under the yoke.

CHAPTER II.

YARBTOWN PATS THE CELESTIALS ON THE BACK.

I HAVE referred to the fact that the people of Yarbtown were simple-minded; they also boasted a fair number of pious people. They were of the good, old-fashioned Presbyterian stock, too, and, consistently with their principles, could not fail to perceive the guiding hand of Providence in this wholesale gathering of heathen in their very midst.

Old Deacon Spud, the first and only deacon of the church, appreciated the situation, and took a move in the right direction upon the very first Sunday following their arrival. By his advice, a church meeting was called for that very evening; all who felt interested in the welfare of the town, and were moved by religious feeling, were invited to be present.

At the appointed hour, the little church was filled. Parson Smudgins was in the chair, duly installed as moderator. After the usual opening exercises of such occasions, to bring the object of the meeting promptly before them, Deacon Spud offered the following concise resolution:

"Whereas, we as a Christian people have ever thirsted for the spread of the Gospel among the heathen tribes of earth; and whereas, God has permitted them to come to our very doors and dwell among us, be it

DEACON SPUD.

"Resolved, That we will do all in our power to urge upon them the teachings of Christ and bring them to a knowledge of their darkness."

Deacon Spud paused after reading this brief but pointed resolution, and wiped an indefinite amount of moisture from his glasses.

No one ever doubted Deacon Spud's honesty of purpose and purity of heart, and public opinion granted that he expressed his sincere convictions in this resolution; therefore, whatever remarks he might have to make upon the subject were looked for with interest by the people.

Hitching up his collar behind, and spreading his horny hands for support upon the moderator's table, he proceeded:

"Mr. Moderator and Brethering: For twenty odd year hev I been int'rested in the convarshun of the heathen. I hev wrastled in prayer, and guv uv my airthly sub'sance. I don't bleeve in shoutin' 'the Gospil-ship is a sailin' on,' 'thout greasin' the riggin' an' fillin' the locker. Now, brethering, we all hev felt kinder down-sperited at times when we've heerd that it cost nigh onto a dollar fer to git twenty-five cents to furrin' parts to put the Gospil into their hands. Now, tez clar, here is a opportunity to do the Lord's work in a ekernomicle way. Here ez benighted heathen right among us. No need fer to go to the expense of shoddin' the feet of messingers to send to 'em—they are here, right here, brethering; an' shell we

let 'em sot up their idles of wood an' stun an' stubble in the light of the Gospil? No! Let us be up and doin', fer the night ez a comin' when we must shet off 'm our work."

Deacon Spud's remarks produced a profound sensation among his auditors. Brought up in the hallowed light of the puritanical society of old New England, where the missionary box was a regular institution, and where their good souls devoured with avidity the accounts of benighted races whose frugal repast was incomplete without a joint or so from some stray missionary, the thought that they had them right at their doors, begging for light, was enough for the moment to astound them.

There was much whispering among the people for awhile; good brethren rubbed their bald heads in perplexity of thought, and saintly sisters held confused converse with each other. There was a general glancing around to see who would speak next.

Finally, like Poe's "Raven," good Sister Peggy Sproul, a saintly maiden lady, whose tongue was ever cocked and primed, "with many a flirt and flutter," arose to her feet. She wrinkled up her forehead and closed her eyes, as she commenced:

"Bruthren, northin' but a general uprisin' on the part uv the hull church shell prevent me from a goin' right among 'em myself. We've plead fer misshunneries to go among 'em to the ends uv the airth, and now we hev 'em

PEGGY SPROUL.

to hum, where our prayers can be heerd by 'em, where the light uv our example can be seen by 'em, an' where the sweetest songs uv Zion can be forever a ringin' in their ears. Why, jess think uv it, bruthren—I seed 'em to-day a eatin' with knittin' needles, an' a spittin' on the gownds they was i'ning. Oh, the darkness of such doin's! I think the least we can do ez to oggernize a Sunday skule right off, an' go to work. I'll be one among yer."

If Deacon Spud's speech had produced an effect, doubly so had Sister Sprouls', for the busy heads and tongues were at it again in more confusion and more earnestly than before.

Probably the good church members of Yarbtown would have considered the matter of a Sabbath school for the Chinese as settled without putting it to vote, if they had not been shocked almost out of their seven senses by the remarks which followed from Brother Job Stearns, a promising young man of the community. Mr. Stearns was possessed of a frank, fine, open face; honesty was written on every feature. Large brown eyes, always widely opened with an unconcealing, wondering expression, told of the trusty soul behind them. Large, heavily built, his body was almost as big as his heart. Rising to his feet quietly, he addressed the moderator respectfully, and without any attempt at speech-making, simply and with a total absence of affectation, he proceeded as follows:

"Friends: You all know me, that I have the Christian

work as much at heart as any among you; and far be it from me to throw unreflectingly a damper upon your feelings in this matter. I am young, and perhaps presuming in addressing you, but I am also dependent upon my labor for my daily bread, and have therefore a right to speak upon any subject which has a tendency to take from me the chance, the privilege of earning a fair, honest living by the sweat of my brow. I have traveled some in this State, and from observation have, I must confess, come to a different conclusion from what you seem to. I can't find it in my heart to give such a cordial greeting to these Chinese as you wish me in common with the rest, for I am confident they will never add to the present prosperity or the future welfare of our town. It is scarcely just to say God has purposely sent them. Shall we lay to Him all the misfortunes which spring from greed of gain? Money is at the bottom of it! Slavery is at the bottom of it! The desire to get something for nothing is at the bottom of it. If God had intended to make of California a Bethel for the conversion of the heathen, undoubtedly He would have corraled in our valleys and canyons the thousands of poor heathen redskins, whom our Christian race have converted by slaughtering them. We must convert the heathen on their own soil, surrounded by the influences they are to contend with, and while they are living under their own institutions. The conversion of one Chinaman in five hundred will not counterbalance the evil which the pres-

ence of the other four hundred and ninety-nine have done. I will give money to send missionaries to the heathen. I will not sacrifice my prospects, and those of my countrymen, in the trial of an experiment which has failed and always will fail. These men do not come here to stay; their connections are at home. They will carry our capital away. They will steal the bread from mouths already strangers to delicacies. Mark my words, brethren; the end of this thing, unless wise counsels prevail, will be sorrow, suffering and blood, instead of the conversion of all China to the standard of Christ."

Never were the people of Yarbtown so nearly thunderstruck.

"The Lud save him!"

"Bruther Starns fallin' from grace—how sudding!"

Good Peggy Sproul threw her scrawny arms high in the air and shook the forefinger of each hand at Job, while she rolled her eyes in horror at such blasphemy and irreligion.

But Job's common sense was lack of spiritual power; Job's calm judgment and wise forethought were impious to the astonished brethren and sisters, and therefore his arguments were thrown away.

The Sabbath school was a settled fact, for the meeting immediately proceeded to appoint a committee whose work should be that of collecting the heathen in next Sunday.

CHAPTER III.

YARBTOWN MANUFACTURES.

Deacon Spud was a Christian man; that is, if the fact that he was in good and regular standing in the church, and never failed in attendance upon divine service, was any evidence. Phrenology said his brain had not been dealt with any too liberally; his head was heavy and broad about the ears, and his forehead was narrow and extremely inclined backwards. His eyes were small and gray, and his hair was brushed sleekly forward over small ears.

And yet Deacon Spud was the autocrat of the village. He had been, at home in the East, and continued his leadership in the new land.

When, after a couple of years' trial of the new lands, the farmers found that an enormous crop of potatoes could be raised in the soil, they began to cast about for a market for this produce. No railroads had as yet reached them, and the little village could not possibly devour all the potatoes hauled into it by the farmers.

Some long-headed ones among them proposed the building of a starch-factory. This would give them a chance to turn their tubers into a marketable production which would keep untainted until such time as it could be shipped.

Deacon Spud, after much figuring, decided to invest his capital in this manner. The deacon had money, but he

had no knowledge of starch-making. Job Stearns had been a hand in a Vermont establishment, and to him the deacon looked for assistance.

Mr. Stearns had served a term of two years in the factory of Josiah Caldwell, of whom the Widow Caldwell was the relict, and up to the time of Mr. Caldwell's failure and subsequent death had been the constant friend and ally of the family. Indeed, common report made him deeply interested in the lively daughter of the aforesaid widow. Anyhow, Job understood the process of turning potatoes into starch, and was therefore the man for the deacon's purpose.

"Must hev some one who can boss the job while I tend he bizniss part, Job," he said.

"But, deacon," answered Job, "I have just taken a fine piece of ground, and am somewhat behindhand in payment. I can't see how I can pay my installments to the company if I leave the ranch and superintend for you."

"Wal, Job," said the deacon, winking his little ferret eyes; "ef I pay you well for the job, can't you 'ford to do it?"

"That depends, deacon, upon what you call paying well, and whether it is to be a continuous job or not," replied Job.

"Wal, I'll tell you what I'll do, Job, and you won't find any better show. I'll give you eighty dollars a month, an'

you may hev the job as long as you like, ef the thing pays."

"It's likely to pay in your hands, deacon. Reckon I'll be safe in taking your offer, if it only depends on your success," said Job; "fact, I don't know a man here who can handle money to better advantage."

"Sho! Why, Brother Starns, you make me ashamed of myself to consider me as jined to airthly idles," sniveled the deacon through his tobacco-juice, while a knowing look lighted up his bead-like eyes.

"Don't fret about that, deacon; nobody ever was foolish enough to suspect you of worshiping anything idle."

Deacon Spud was wise to secure the services of such a man as Job. Job could run the mill; he could keep the books; besides, he was a popular man among the people. The building occupied by the deacon in his manufacturing was unpretentious, simply framed, sided with single boards, and covered with shakes. It was large enough for the infancy of the factory, and it was not long until the storeroom was full of the well-soiled sacks of potatoes.

The deacon made a good article, and it had a ready sale. A little box-factory sprung up alongside of the creek, and both the deacon and Job were on the fair road to success. All this, of course, had occurred long before John Chinaman took it into his head to migrate to Yarbtown. As the town grew, the business grew also, and the deacon's capital with them

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHINESE SABBATH SCHOOL.

JOB STEARNS met Bessie Caldwell in front of the little village church on the Sunday following the preliminary meeting, and took advantage of the half hour before school to have a walk and chat among the spreading live-oaks on the roadside.

"So, Bessie, you are going to tackle the Chinamen to-day, are you?"

"I suppose I shall take a class of them, Job, if they ask me to."

"Good for you, Bessie; you show them how to read, and make them tell you how to do your hair up."

"Now, Job, you must not talk so; you know it's naughty," pouted Bessie.

"Well, I declare! Naughty to do up your hair? Just think how cool and comfortable I should be in that hot factory if I had my head shaved like John. But seriously, Bessie, I wish these fellows had never come among us. You can't understand it, but I do. It's all right to teach them how to be Christians, but we can't afford to give our daily bread for it. And it will come to that, and before long, too, Bessie."

"Oh, nonsense, Job; they are a poor ignorant set, and do work that you men would never think of doing," replied Bessie.

"That's all very well to call them scavengers of work; but the very crows steal our corn, and so these fellows will gradually steal our work and do it for a quarter of what we can; and the more you educate them, the better they do it," sadly responded Job.

"Isn't there enough for all to do, Job? And if they do it as well as the rest, why should they not have their share?"

"That's it, Bessie—that's what the money-kings say: 'They do their work as well and cheaper than others, and who's to hinder us from employing them?' What are the poor fellows to do whose places these foreigners take?"

"Goods will be cheaper, they say, the cheaper the labor," remarked Bessie, thoughtfully.

"That is small comfort. Can I pay even low prices for my bread if I cannot get work fit for a decent man to do?"

"It seems to me, though," said Bessie, "that we ought to teach the poor creatures all we can; it seems as though God had sent them to us for that purpose."

"Yes," said Job, bitterly, "send your ammunition of learning over to the ignorant enemy for their use against us. I believe in America for Americans or those who intend to become Americans, or else spend their money among us."

Just then the bell in the church-tower began to ring out

noisily. Bessie hugged her little Testament up to her heart and went into the porch. Job Stearns had made her feel a little down-spirited by his conversation, and for a moment she hesitated, as she saw him walking slowly down the street away from the church at whose services he had always hitherto been punctual in attendance.

The jabbering crowd of Chinamen who had now begun to assemble in the vestry absorbed all her attention.

Peggy Sproul had been out all the week drumming them up. The good creature had entered into it with all her soul, and here they were, fresh-shaven and clean. Peggy was hopping about eagerly, finding seats for them.

"Here you, John, you set down right here, poor creeturs; you've come at last to a knowledge of your sinful state! No, no, what's name, don't set thar, that's the female side o' the meetin' hus. Poor fellow," said she, patting a bewildered Chinaman on the back, "you'll soon know all about Dan'l en the lion's den, an' all o' them things. Oh, ter think I should ever live ter see this day, when they come a flockin' from Greenland's Icee Mountings."

Quiet and order were soon secured. Bessie seated herself at the little cabinet organ, and the brethren and sisters sung the grand old missionary hymn.

Deacon Spud was elected superintendent of the school, and proceeded for once without a speech, to the task of arranging them in classes. Volunteer teachers were called for, and Bessie, after giving Job a thought of pity, went

nobly to her work. There they were before her, five wondering Johns; wondering first of all what it meant, and wondering again what the little woman sitting there so modestly was going to do. Bessie had undertaken to teach these heathen. How should she begin? She knew but little of Chinamen. Did they know what they had come there for? She would find out.

So she commenced in a low, sweet, abashed voice with the first pair of almond-eyes looking so amazedly at her.

"You know, John, this is God's house"—the Chinaman raised his head and stared all about the room—"You have come here to learn to be a Christian, you understand?"

John opened his mouth with a broad grin for a moment, then shook his head vigorously in the affirmative, saying at the same time, "Yeah—yeah—me sabe. You teachee me, me be good Clistian allee same white man. Make heap money allee same Deekum Tater."

Bessie had hard work to keep from laughing, but she only bit her lip and glanced around to see if the deacon had heard. She saw nothing but the amused face of Mr. Job Stearns, who had stolen in and taken up a station a seat or two behind her. Bessie flushed with vexation.

"He's promising material, Bessie. Go ahead, you can make something out of him."

She gave Job a little frown and changed her tactics. She determined to begin at the foundation, by teaching

BESSIE'S PROMISING PUPIL.

them the alphabet. She found them adepts at learning, for before the hour was half out they had the letters nearly committed to memory.

Job did not interrupt her again, but felt all the while that every letter they learned was a loaf of bread stolen from the mouths of his prospective decendants. Perhaps Job was at fault; perhaps he should have entered heartily into the work and instructed these men in the art of Christian living. His heart failed him. He was a sincere man, and would do nothing which his judgment did not approve. His money he would give freely, and always had, to any man who would go to China, and make it a life-purpose and work to save these men; but in the world, he wished to have a fair share of it, and fair play for his muscles and brain, and he felt keenly the mistake of elevating a nomadic race which should prove to be a stone on the track of social progress.

Peggy Sproul had exercised less judgment than Bessie, and instead of instructing her class in such a manner as would prove a lasting benefit to them, she kept them in a perpetual state of excitement by relating, in her expressive way, the stories of Gideon, Moses in the bulrushes, and David and Goliath. She told them of Satan, who goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. They looked at one another in astonishment a moment, when one of them said, "Me no 'flaid. Bymby burnee heap fire-clacker, scare 'em 'way."

The rest of the teachers pursued substantially the same course as Bessie Caldwell, and upon the whole the school proved to be a successful institution so far. After they were dismissed, Job sat so long brooding over his evil forebodings that he had the doubtful pleasure of seeing Simon Spud, the son of the deacon, walking home with Bessie.

"Another Chinaman," he muttered; "why can't the girl stick to white folks?"

PEGGY SPROUL AND HER CLASS.

CHAPTER V.

THE ENTERING WEDGE.

Sister Peggy Sproul was one whose good labors for those in whom she took an interest did not cease with the efforts to save their souls; but understanding that other things are needful in this wicked world besides grace, she had been, for the six months they had been residing in Yarbtown, earnestly exerting herself in behalf of the temporal welfare of John Chinaman of Yarbtown.

Widow Caldwell, and two or three other lone ones of the community, had heretofore enjoyed a fair share of the washing and ironing business. There had been some falling off, but little, in the number of her customers since the Chinamen came. She was not at all alarmed by the colored signs of John, indicating the dirty holes in which washing and ironing might be done at reasonable rates.

"Surely, Bessie," she remarked, when her daughter suggested that there might be opposition to their business; "surely my old neighbors and friends of my husband would not desert me for these strangers; and then they are foreigners. I would give my custom always to my own people."

"But, ma, Mr. Stearns says our folks love the 'almighty dollar' as much as anybody, and when these Chinamen underbid us they will all give them their work to do."

"Job is worried beyond all reason. He is showing

more of an evil disposition than I supposed him to possess. He will have to be careful. I'm afraid the church will bring him to task for his outspoken contempt for these poor heathen."

Upon the very day on which the widow thus expressed her confidence in her neighbors, Bill Ferguson came sauntering in.

"Mother says you needn't send up for our clothes next Monday."

"Why not, Billy?" inquired the widow; "is there anything the matter, that she don't like my work?"

"Oh, I guess not," replied Bill; "but then she says she can get them fricaseed, fussed and frilled up to the Chinaman's for what you wash an' iron them for."

"Yes, and spit on, too," indignantly cried Bessie.

"And starve a good woman while she stuffs a cussed foreign pig," interposed Job Stearns, as he came swinging into the room and heard the explanation of Bill. "You see, Mrs. Caldwell," continued he, turning to her, "the contest is commencing just as I said it would. Next thing I will have to submit to a lowering of my wages or wear a pig-tail."

"See here, Job," said Bill, turning on him, "you quit insulting my marm. You'd better look out how you talk. Miss Sproul says she has recommended to Deacon Spud to discharge such an ungodly man as you are, and take in some of these promising heathen."

"Yes, and I'll bet a sack of potatoes that Peggy has whined and canted your mother into sending them her washing, too," said Job.

"Sister Caldwell, Sister Caldwell," called a whining voice out at the back-door.

Widow Caldwell went sadly out of the entry into the kitchen, where Peggy Sproul had seated herself in a chair, and was fanning herself vigorously with her big sun-bonnet.

"Sister Caldwell," she began, in a voice suggestive of machine oil, "the people whose washin' an' irening you do hev asked me to visit you en a sisterly way, 'nask you to take off twenty-five cents a dozen. Them air Chinamen is a doin' it fer that much less 'n you."

"Well, I suppose I'll have to, if they can get it done for that elsewhere."

"An' you must get a pair of them ar tongs to crimp 'em with, sech as the Chinamen use—"

"But won't my crimping machine do? They never have complained of that before," said the bewildered widow.

"No; for you see them ar tongs put two or three inches more crimping on the things. You'll hev to do things up scrimp an' stiff now, I can tell you, if you want ter keep the bizness in your hands," replied Peggy.

"But, Sister Sproul, I can't use those tongs; they require skill," said the poor woman.

"Wall, I declar! Now, do you mean to say them

heathens hev more skill nor you do? How do you expect your friends can send their work to you if you can't do it?"

"Sister Sproul, I have only my washing to depend on. My neighbors have let me do it for some years, and have found no fault; and if they now will take it from me and send it to heathen foreigners, simply because they can crimp two or three inches more on their underclothing, why the good Lord must look out for me and all poor folks, that's all."

"Sister Caldwell, Sister Ca-l-d-well! don't dare to lay it ter the Lord. If them ar benighted heathen can do it, an' you can't, then you must take the fault to hum. Good day, Sister Caldwell," and Peggy flouted out of the room.

Poor Mrs. Caldwell dragged herself, tired and worn out with work and the fret of her conversation with Peggy, back to the sitting-room, where Job and Bessie had remained, interested listeners to the confab.

"Oh, Job! oh, Bessie! what shall I do? They won't let me do the work—they don't mean to."

"That's Christianity, that is," said Job, sneeringly; "selling the bodies of their own kith and kin to save the souls of the heathen. But never mind, Mother Caldwell; Job Stearns has muscle and health, and he'll see that you don't come to want."

Widow Caldwell looked up in surprise at the word "mother," and then glanced at Bessie, who hid her blushing face in her hands.

CHAPTER VI.

JOB A MISSIONARY.

DESPONDENCY would be no word to express the state of Job Stearn's feelings as he left the house of Mrs. Caldwell —desperation would be a far better word.

The hen will fly with feathers erect at the dog to protect her brood, the mother forgets self and self-interests when her loved ones are in danger; and so Job felt as he saw those who were dearer than life to him dispossessed of their means of earning an honest living, and foresaw in the near future the furling of his own useless sails, all because of what appeared to him to be the veriest fanaticism and cant.

What should he do? Should he burn down the filthy wash-houses of John? No, that would be but the fighting of a gross evil with a grosser sin. Job in his present temper was capable of it, aye, capable of anything desperate. But Job's heart was not. He would watch, that is what he would do.

Watch Chinatown like a cerberus; he would note every objectionable feature, watch every overt act on the part of the detestable John. He would pry into their secrets, he would unearth all their deviltry, he would persevere until he possessed facts enough to convince the most stubborn defender of them.

Job's feet kept pace with his thoughts; they turned from

the impulse of his mind toward Chinatown, and before he was aware of that fact, the contemptible little sign of Hop Ling was swinging over his head.

"And they would persuade me that these people have but to imbibe Christian ideas to become equal to the best of us. Humph! So has a Shoshone, so has a Piute, so has a mud-turtle, so has a rotten stick of timber. Look into that door there, now, Job; room, ten feet square, six Johns smudging it with nasty smoke, and as I live, there are seven bunks in it. Great Cæsar's ghost! How do they sleep? Yes, there's a woman, too. I wonder if Peggy Sproul ever looked in here?"

Job's comments to himself were interrupted by a fierce jabbering and scolding in the house. Never did Billingsgate Market make such a hubbub on its busiest morning. The shrill voices of the fisherwomen of London were dulcet strains to the loud babble which came forth from John's at that moment. The woman's voice seemed the loudest; she was berating one of the Chinamen roundly for something. In a moment she came running into the street, followed by three Chinamen. Up and down the sidewalk they chased her, she jabbering like an insane parrot the while. The woman made a sudden turn and darted into a dark doorway, the valiant Johns following immediately on her footsteps. Pretty soon sounds of blows falling on something with a dull thud came out of the darkness. Job rushed in.

JOB ON THE WARPATH.

"You helpee me! You helpee me!" screamed the woman. Job's eyes were soon accustomed to the darkness, and they saw a sight that would have been instructive to even good Peggy Sproul.

The two Chinamen had the woman pressed down to the floor, and one of them was engaged in the elevating, Christianizing operation of decapitating her with a pick handle. Job seized him by the throat and hurled him backwards to the floor. He shook him as a cat would a mouse while he inculcated some instructive missionary teaching. As soon as the Chinaman regained his feet, Job recognized him as Bessie's promising Sabbath-school scholar. Mr. Job Stearns was a gallant man, and he felt called upon to see that the woman regained her home without further injury, so he escorted her down to Hop Ling's, and fearing a continuation of the outbreak should he leave immediately, sat down and politely informed Mr. Hop Ling's attendants that he would gladly break the head of any one of them who should presume to take vengeance upon Mrs. Whatever-her-name-was.

There was a peculiar game going on in the room, and Job, thinking perhaps that here was a good chance to inform himself as to their habits as he would ever have, remained to watch its progress.

Job had refused to interest himself in the Mission School, simply because of the fact that it was equivalent to giving the undesired enemy possession of his kinsman's best ammunition.

But was not Job a missionary of the first water? Certainly he bore strong contrast to one of the tract distributors of a flourishing city in the east, who found a poor family in the sixth story of a crowded house, starving and freezing to death, and complacently sat down with his comfortable overcoat on to read a chapter on humble submission to Providence. When he returned to the general office he told his story, and while he was telling it a poor laboring man shot out of the room, found the sufferers, and left his overcoat and a basket of provisions.

A strange diversion from my story! No, it is not. A great principle which Job appreciated underlies it. Substantial, practical instruction and elevation of the human race in its ignorance and suffering is better than theoretical. Job's jist was practical—the mission encouragement of a people separated from us by thousands of years of contrary teaching and living, and that encouragement given on our own ground, in our own suffering cities, is theoretical. If a man is to fight grizzlies he must learn to do it where grizzlies exist. We don't want his knife and rifle practice in our parlors nor in our peaceful grain fields.

Job stayed, and he saw hundreds of dollars which ought to have been turned into flour and tea for Widow Caldwell and her like pass from hand to hand until a good share of it was gracefully gathered by the winsome-looking representative of Hop Ling, never, alas! to touch fair hands again, never to feed hungry mouths again here until it had

crossed the great Pacific and strayed back in the pockets of a new importation of the almond-eyed.

Job arose heart-sick and disgusted, not so much by what he had seen as by the foolish, short-sightedness and stubbornness of the whole class of Peggy Sprouls scattered all over the land. As he went out the door he met Simon Spud.

"Aha, my fine boy," said Simon, "I've caught you this time."

"Well, what of it?" responded Job.

"Ho! what of it? Didn't I see you walking down street with that Chinawoman, and didn't I see you in the gambling hell for over an hour?"

"Well, you did; and what of it again?" said Job.

"You are a deep one. Don't I intend to tell Bessie Caldwell, aha! And won't the governor raise his eyes in church-meeting when Peggy Sproul prefers charges, eh? What of it now, my boy?"

"Sime, it's none of your business, anyhow. I protected a defenseless woman from a set of devilish Chinamen."

"Yes, ye-s, you did, and then walked home with her to a gambling-house and stayed an hour. I saw yer, I did."

"It isn't worth while to waste words with you, Sime. If you want to lie about it, I don't know who can hinder you." And upon that, Job turned on his heel and walked off.

Simon Spud doubled up his fist for a moment, but a

glance at the back of Job's broad-shouldered retreating figure undoubled it again.

"No, that won't do," muttered Simon; "I can do better than that. Oh, I have it! Witnesses—yes, that's it; witnesses, that's what I want. I'll prove him a rascal and a whining hypocrite, and then the field's clear. 'My dear Bessie,' yes, that's what he called her. Guess we'll swap tongues after this. We'll let him cuss awhile, and I'll 'dear Bessie.'"

Simon Spud was a second edition of Spud Sr., without the added grace, and partaking of a similarly crafty disposition, was fully capable of carrying out the programme he had in mind. Part first of that programme was to get a witness to Job's perfidy. Simon looked around to see that nobody was in sight, then darted into the den which Job had just quit.

SIMON SPUD.

CHAPTER VII.

JOB'S PERFIDY.

JOB STEARNS had it in mind to do another missionary act that day, so he started down to Mrs. Caldwell's. His good purpose was to comfort the poor widow in her affliction.

"Mr. Stearns," said the widow, "have you seen Deacon Spud to-day?"

"No, I have not; he has not been in the office all day, and this evening I have been busy. Does he want to see me?"

"Yes, he has been down here in a terrible flurry to find you. There's something wrong up at the office!"

"Did he tell you what the matter was?" inquired Job.

"No, he only seemed anxious to find you."

"Well, I'll go up to the house and see him. But, Mrs. Caldwell, I came in to see if you could board me awhile, I am tired of my present quarters; and then they have a China cook, and that I won't stand."

"Oh, Job," cried Bessie, "that will be nice, for mother don't know really what to do, and a boarder will help her so much."

"Hush, child," said the mother. "Certainly, Job, I will be glad to have you come, but I'm afraid my table won't suit you."

"Oh, pine-wood will do for that," laughed Job, as he went out.

"Now for the old man. I wonder what has happened? I believe I was born into troûble as the sparks fly upward," soliloquized he, as he bent his footsteps toward the deacon's house.

Deacon Spud met him on the threshold, and bade him good-evening in a tone so constrained that it informed Job that whatever was the matter, he was somehow mixed up with it in the deacon's mind. He thought of a dozen things in a moment, trying to recall some overt act on his part, some forgotten task, some neglected business; but he had been faithful to his work, there was nothing for which his conscience troubled him, so he gave him a cordial, hearty "good-evening."

"I hev been hunting fer ye, Job; there's something wrong down ter the office. Mebbe you ken tell me what 'tis," suggested the deacon, peering cautiously into Job's face as he spoke.

"I don't understand what you mean, deacon," replied Job.

"You don't? Mebbe you can't tell me 'thout thinkin' a long spell, whar thet ar' money's gone ter."

"What money? Gone to? What do you mean?"

"Wal, I mean thet some one 'thout grace or mussy hez bin a takin' what don't rightfully belong to them down to the office."

"Stealing the factory money, do you mean that?" inquired Job, in astonishment.

"Yes, thet's it,, bein' a goin' on fer some time — first a dollar, then two, then ten, and now twenty all ter once."

Job Stearns listened to this statement of theft in mingled amazement and dread. He and the deacon only had the key to the money drawer; he alone kept the accounts. The key of the drawer was that moment in his pocket. Who could have done such an act? Why had the old man been inspecting the accounts so carefully? Had the deacon become suspicious, suspicious of him, Job Stearns, who never knew what it was to have aught breathed against his honor?

"Job," said the deacon, "I'm afeared some one hez bin trusted too much, eh?"

"Who have you trusted, deacon? Have you trusted anybody with your key? Mine has never been out of my hands."

"'Zactly," said the deacon, "jess what I was a comin' at. Who could a done it 'thout was you or I, an' ez it's my money, 'taint likely I stole my own."

"That, I presume is equivalent to saying I took it," commented Job, sarcastically.

"I really don't like to suspicion on yer, Job; but, yer see, I've marked consid'able change in yer during the last few months. Yer don't cum ter church much. Yer don't int'rest yerself in the good work like yer used ter. Now, I calclate a man who makes sech changes en his crackter en so short a time would be likely to be untruthful an' thievious."

"Deacon Spud," shouted Job, scarcely able to retain his temper, "I indignantly deny the truth of such a charge. I consider you a sniveling, sneaking hypocrite, without one grain of honor in you. I steal your money—your paltry fifty or sixty dollars! Heavens! If I was going to sell my honor I would charge higher than that for it. No, no, Deacon Spud, your meanness is on the surface, like grease on water. You wish to worry me out of the mill, save yourself the trouble of discharging me, goad me out of it in order that you may fill up the places of honest men with Chinamen. I understand it. I have expected it. I've seen the same thing in the mines. Knock off first four bits, then a dollar, and then, if the poor fellows won't leave, put Chinamen in alongside of them. Go ahead, Deacon Spud; such a course may bring you blessing, but I don't believe it."

The deacon's face was a sight to see during Job's lecture. First it turned red with anger, then a gray pallor spread over it, and finally settled upon a white heat.

"Job Starns, Job Starns," he commenced, with a comical attempt at dignified severity, "I could fergive the loss o' my money, but these aspussions you cast up agin my good name I must not fergive. Ez it any wonder these poor but honest heathen, thusting fer nollidge, should be employed to fill the places of such vipers ez you, whom I've nurrished en my buzzum, whose hands I've upheld, an' fer whose int'rests I've daily prayed fer!"

The deacon ended with a whine and sniffle, and

screwed his face up until it resembled that of a child in anticipation of a good spanking.

Before Job had gathered wits enough to reply to this pathetic eloquence of the good deacon, the door swung open, a hat was flung into the room, and Simon Spud entered behind it.

"Good evening, guv'ner. What's the rumpus now? What are you bawling about—and what in thunder are you here for, Job? Cheeky, by George, to come right from where I saw you to the guv'ner's. Been wheedling and coddling him, I s'pose."

Job made no reply to this impudent speech, but the old deacon caught an inference from the knowing look on his promising scion's features.

"Eh! what! Whar's he bin now, Simon? What's he bin adoin' ?"

"Oh, nowheres and nothing. I s'pose he will say," grinned Simon.

"I will save him the trouble of telling you, Deacon Spud. I've been down in Chinatown, protecting an abused woman," quietly remarked Job.

"Hear him, guv'ner—he's been down to Chinatown protecting an abused woman! Now, that's good. Give us a rest!" shouted Sime, punching Job in the ribs with his forefinger.

"Quit that ar slang, Simon, an' tell me what yer mean," said Spud Senior.

"Well, s'pose I must, seeing he called me a liar when I told him I saw it all. Don't know as I should have blowed on him, but for that," answered Simon, with a leer.

"If you tell him what you told me, connecting it with the same inference, I will take great pleasure in repeating that assertion about your truthfulness," said Job.

"Oh, you will, will ye? Well, guv'ner, I don't know anything about his inference; but I saw him walking down Chinatown with Ah Chung's woman. She's a good woman, pa," sneeringly. "He walked down street with her, and went into the gambling hell down near Hop Ling's, and stayed there over an hour."

"Job Starns, ez this true?" piously inquired the deacon.

"True, every word of, as I guess Ah Chung can vouch," said Job, smiling, as he thought of Ah Chung's discomfiture.

"Wall, I s'pose yer won't deny now thet yer took thet ar money, for this shows whar 'twent ter?"

"Deacon, I still deny any knowledge of the whereabouts of your money. I am not a child, that I should account to you for everything I do. It's none of your business what I did in Chinatown."

"Money! What money, pa?" inquired Simon, with great apparent astonishment.

"Why, some one hez been astealin' money from the office," replied Deacon Spud.

"That accounts for it, then. I wondered where Job got so much as Ah Chung says he lost there to-night," said Simon.

Job's temper was just rising, and he was afraid he should be compelled to treat Simon as he did Ah Chung, so he hastily put on his hat, and darted out of the house.

CHAPTER VIII.

SIMON SPUD SECURES A WITNESS.

It did not take as long for Sime Spud to familiarize his eyes with the darkness, nor his nose with the smells of the black hole into which he darted, as it did Job Stearns. It was an old story to him; he had been there before. The Chinaman to whom Job had just imparted some civilizing information, was sitting with an angry scowl upon his face brooding over the thorough whipping he had just received.

A Chinaman, like the redskin, never forgets either a real or a fancied injury. Revenge is strongly ingrafted in their nature. Their revenge is usually as mean and treacherous as that of the meanest Digger Indian. They can smile in your face while they pour poison into your cup. So Ah Chung — for such was the name of Bessie's promising pupil — was at this moment meditating revenge upon Job Stearns.

One could see that some pleasing imaginations of his enemy's discomfort were flitting through his brain, by the strange contortions of his facial muscles. Whether his dreams of revenge consisted of plans for the use of the silent knife, or whether he simply meditated upon the plan of requesting Ling Yung, the washman, to cut off the shirt-buttons of all the friends of Job, would be a difficult thing for a white man to decide. Anyway, he meditated revenge; and the more he meditated the fiercer became his scowl, the tighter the clasp of his doubled-up fist.

Simon Spud came in at this opportune moment.

"Hello, Chung! how you do, eh?"

"Oh, me feel bad, me killee some one," replied Ah Chung.

"Oh, guess-not. What's the matter?" inquired Simon.

"You sabe big man, he mashee taters, eh?"

"Yes, me know him."

"All light—well, he catchee me, he putee head on me."

"You foolee me," said Simon.

"You lie, me no foolee you. He come here, he knockee me down, he battee my eye—you see, look—*you see!*" screamed Ah Chung, and he got up and walked furiously round the room shaking his fist at an imaginary Job Stearns.

"Why you no killee him?" laughed Simon, with a wicked look in his eyes.

"Me killee him, shelliff killee me," responded Ah Chung.

"You bet, that's so, Chung; but see here, me show you how you pay him back, you do it?"

"You show me, you tellee me, me do it."

"Job he knocked you down, he takee your woman here, he stay long time, he play gamble game, you sabe?" inquired the wily Simon.

"Yeah," nodded Chung.

"You comee bymeby, you tellee lot men so, you swear to it?"

"Yeah, me tellee, me sweree.'

"All right, me payee you ten dollar."

"Me sabe," grinned Chung, and Simon had secured his witness.

"Now we have game cards, and I beatee you," said Simon.

"No, me beatee you, you see."

Ah Chung brought out the cards, and seated at the greasy table, they began to play. In a few minutes a little pile of money began to accumulate in the center. Ah Chung won it. Again they went at it, and again Ah Chung won. Simon Spud showed no concern; either he was used to losing, or he was playing for higher stakes, not on the table. Perhaps he wished to conciliate the vengeful Chung, to win him the more thoroughly to his plans.

They played until Simon had emptied his purse, still without expressing any disapprobation then he took his hat to leave, playfully pulling Chung's ear as he said: "You no forget, Job he stay long time, he gamble, you swear."

"All light, good bye," said Chung.

Ah Chung stopped for a moment after Simon Spud had gone, to place the money carefully in his purse, and then, with a satisfied smile, walked out the door. He had scarcely reached the street, when the little figure of the Chinawoman dropped quietly out of one of the bunks where she had been ensconced, a quiet listener to the parley.

"He beatee me with pickee handle; me no forget. Me play game card, now," she muttered, as she watched the retreating forms of Chung and Simon.

SIMON SECURES A WITNESS.

CHAPTER IX.

THE WEDGE ADVANCES.

THE next morning after Job had made known his wish to board there, the Widow Caldwell and her daughter began to make preparations for him.

"This will help us amazingly, Bessie," said the happy woman. "His board will at least keep us from debt."

"Yes, mother; and then, you know, we can buy our vegetables of Mr. Carrot. He comes every other day, and he will let us have them cheap," said Bessie.

The best room was cleaned, swept and dusted, the prettiest counterpane put on the bed, and Bessie secretly transferred considerable finery for the walls from her own room.

While they were engaged in arranging his room, there came a knock at the kitchen-door.

Bessie went down. There stood a Chinaman with two huge baskets slung upon a pole over his shoulder.

"How do!"

"How do you do, John!" said Bessie.

"You sabe Ah Chung?"

"Yes, I know him," said Bessie.

"Ah Chung, he my cousin. I sellee you 'taters, gleen con, eh?"

"Oh, you've got vegetables!" said Bessie.

"Yeah; me sellee him cheap," said the Chinaman,

holding up a bunch of onions, and displaying his green corn and potatoes at the same time.

"How cheap?" asked Bessie.

"Oh, heap cheapee. Other man he takee two bittee, I sellee him one bittee."

Just then a ranch wagon drove up to the gate.

"Hold on, Bessie, don't buy of him, I want to supply my neighbors myself."

It was Mr. Carrot with his market wagon.

"But he says he can undersell you," laughed Bessie.

"The d—ab—I beg pardon, miss, but these fellows don't give a man a chance to live. What was he going to sell you?"

"A bunch of onions for a bit," said Bessie, laughing again.

"A bunch of onions for a *bit!* Here, I'll sell you a sack for two bits. How you likee that, John, eh?" said Carrot, turning angrily to John.

"All light; you sellee for two bittee one sack to-day, to-mollow you come, you takee two bittee one bunch. Me sabe," said the John.

"No, I'll be d—excuse me—get out of this! git!" he cried, as he gave the Chinaman a little help with his big farm-boots.

"But, Mr. Carrot, why should not he sell for much less than you, if he wants to?" inquired Bessie.

"Bessie, it's a long story to tell, but let me explain.

We came here and worked hard to make our land produce, we built this town up, we created the factories, and we deserve the profit to come from it. These men sell cheaper, but don't they cheapen wages also? Why, if you get three dollars a day, can't you afford to pay two bits for a bunch of onions? But if these heathen, by underselling their labor, lower your wages, you can't do it. They can live for three days on what won't keep you or me one. This is a white man's country. Let's keep wages up and get a fair price for our provisions."

"But what's the difference, Mr. Carrot? I don't understand. If Chinamen bring down wages, they bring down prices also."

"Yes," answered Carrot, "bring wages down to their level. I tell you, again, a white man cannot live on their level. God help us if we must herd like Chinamen to please the moneyed men of California!"

"It's a deeper question than I can comprehend," said Bessie.

"Yes," replied Carrot, "and it will be too deep for the laboring class to understand so long as our capitalists hedge it about with so much sophistry. Anyhow, you tell mother to buy of me, and she shan't lose by it."

This matter of peddling ranch produce had indeed become serious in Yarbtown. The price of everything in the farm line had been so lowered by the Chinese that any

man who wished to make a respectable living at that business, found it up-hill work.

"Well, isn't that all right?" asks a Peggy Sproul, from his counting-room in San Francisco. "If they can do it and our people won't, why not encourage them, hey?"

Ay! ay! but the Chinamen are not confined to one kind of work; if they were, then our working people could quit that and turn to something else. They can do anything. They follow our hard-working people close on their heels, steal their trades, cheapen labor, and then sit down to a dinner of rice and potato sprouts, such as a hearty white would starve on.

The natural result of such a course of things will be to degrade the working classes of the United States to the level of the Chinese, in their manner of living, in dress, in food, in morals, in everything, and will bring into being a marked separation of the people into castes.

Here was Mrs. Caldwell, for instance. She had made only such charges for her work as gave her a decent living. John Chinaman does it for just one-half this amount. What shall she do? She cannot live on as little as John. Sew? She never could do that, and besides, the sewing-machine is beyond her reach at present. Take boarders? Exactly; she was intending to do exactly that thing, for, thank God, we have hardly yet fallen so low as to patronize a Chinese boarding-house.

This outcry against the cheap labor of the Chinese has

been compared to the opposition raised by English mechanics to the labor-saving machinery introduced among them. There is no comparison. Men and muscle must be had to make and run these machines, but Chinamen, pshaw! they are ready-made by millions.

CHAPTER X.

JOB BEFORE THE CHURCH.

Deacon Spud was not quite so bad a man as Job had supposed him to be. Crafty he was; grasping, mean and stingy he certainly gave evidence of being.

Job had seen pretty clearly the wily deacon's plans for the future. The starch-manufacturing business had been developed shrewdly, until it had attained to what the Yarbtown people considered collossal. Fruit-drying and canning, broom-making, and box-manufacturing were all carried on under the deacon's supervision, and by his capital. The wages of the workmen under Job had formerly been two dollars and a half per day; the deacon, after much whining about hard times, had cut off the half-dollar. Several times the agent for the Chinese company had been in and over the works. Once he had brought with him several of his countrymen.

Job had noticed all this, and the suspicion was a natural one that the old game of freezing out the white men was to be played over by Deacon Spud.

That Spud had, however, willfully and maliciously charged Job with the theft of money for the purpose of disgracing him, is too grave a suspicion to entertain for a moment. That he gladly hailed the advent of any pretext for discharging Job, there can be no doubt.

Deacon Spud's conscience was not a tender one; it was

very elastic; a great many bright tints enlivened its outward show, but there was no leading color. There were ditches, with mud-settlers attached, running down the foothills above the valley of Yarbtown, and perhaps the deacon had learned a lesson from them. The ditches run for miles full of mud from the diggings, and then pause at the mud-settler, deposit a little mud, and go on to the next, going through the same operation at intervals. The deacon collected a good bit of mud in the course of the week in his heart, and paused on Sunday to settle a little—then run on to the next Sabbath, and so on. The good man flattered himself that in this way he kept his conscience clear. Since Job's visit to his house, the deacon had met Sister Peggy Sproul and several of the good people of ultra views connected with the society, and they determined to bring the sinful Job to an account before the church.

Charges had been preferred against him, and a notice of them duly served upon him. These charges were various. Failure to interest himself in the welfare of Zion, yielding to a passionate temper, gambling and being in a low state of morals generally, all were presented as sufficient to exclude him from God's family. The good, pious Brother Smudgins, and be it said he loved Job and believed in him, had appointed an afternoon to try the case. A committee had been selected to act as jury, some bitterly prejudiced against Job, and some favorably disposed.

Job was popular, and his openly-expressed distrust of

the Chinamen had bound the working people closely to him.

Job Stearns had chosen to conduct his own defense. Brother Slowly had been selected to conduct the prosecution. "It gave him much pain," he said, "to be placed in such a position as to seem instrumental in destroying the Christian character of one whom they had long known; but he owed his first duty to God, and, under the circumstances, he should waive all affection, and adhere dutifully to the task assigned him." He then read the charges for the pastor, and the reverend gentleman smiled in a friendly way upon Job, as he asked what he had to say to them.

Job simply answered: "The charges are false, absolutely false."

Peggy Sproul closed her eyes in meek submission, for the present, to the perfidy of the man.

Mr. Slowly then presented a sketch of what he proposed to prove, and gave way for Job's turn.

Mr. Stearns begged to be excused until such time as the apparent facts presented should demand his attention. Mr. Slowly then called Simon Spud to the stand.

"You are a member of this church, Mr. Spud?"

"No, sir, I am not," answered Sime.

"Are you willing to make a solemn affirmation that what you are to say shall be the truth, and the whole truth?"

"You b—, yes, sir, I mean."

"Tell what you know of a certain visit of Brother Job Stearns to Chinatown."

Simon then went through his story, still adhering to the statements made to his father.

"Who was this woman?"

"She was a woman who is the property of Ah Chung."

"Has she a good character?"

"No, sir; she is a bad woman."

"Did Brother Stearns stay in the gambling h—house long enough to play a game?"

"Yes, over an hour."

"That'll do, Mr. Spud. Brother Stearns, you can question him."

"Sime, you've told the truth so far," said Job, "let us see if you can stick to it. You saw me walk down street with the Chinawoman; did you see the contemptible fight which preceded it?"

"I saw Ah Chung trying to get her from you, and you nearly killed him," answered Simon, boldly.

"Did you not know that Ah Chung had beaten her with a pick-handle, and that I went down with her to protect her?"

"No, didn't see anything of the sort," replied Simon Spud.

"You said the woman is a bad one; how do you know?"

"Why, I—I should say everybody says so," stammered Simon.

"Oh, everybody says so! Do you *know* what her character is?" asked Job, fiercely.

"No, only by what people say."

"Did you *see* me play a game of cards?"

"Yes, I did," asserted Spud.

"That's all," said Job.

Ah Chung was the next witness called. He came up with a vacant stare on his face, and turned to Mr. Slowly.

"Ah Chung, will you affirm, on your honor, that you will tell the truth and the whole truth?" asked Slowly.

"Me no got him honor," replied Chung.

"No, I guess not," muttered Job.

After the committee had repossessed themselves of the proper gravity, Slowly tried again.

"Will you promise faithfully to tell the truth?"

"Where 'um Facefullee, me no see him?" said Chung, looking around with a wondering, imbecile look.

"Hold on, Mr. Slowly," shouted Simon Spud, in the midst of the laughter which followed this sally, "let me try."

"If Brother Stearns don't object," mildly interposed the pastor.

"Oh, go ahead; we can all hear him," said Job.

With this permission, Simon proceeded.

"You sabe, you Chung, you swearee?"

"Yeah, me sabe," grinned the rascal.

"You sabe what 'um swearee is?"

"Yeah," said Chung, grinning until all his teeth shone out from his projecting lips. "Yeah, him one bigee G—d d—ee."

This brought down the moderator, attorneys, jury, and all. Simon did not give up the attempt though.

"You sabe Mellican man Josh?"

"Yeah."

"You sabe what he do to you if you tellee lie now?"

"Yeah; Melican man Josh gimme h—l if I tellee lie."

"There, there, Brother Slowly, that ought to satisfy the most particular jurist," laughed the pastor.

"Now, friends, I don't feel satisfied with such a witness; that is no expression of an understanding of the nature of an oath," said Job. "Is this the kind of testimony you are about to try my character on? A Chinaman, a heathen, who has no notions of accountability; no comprehension of a good and just God? It's insulting to the good sense of the people of Yarbtown to think, for a moment, of balancing his word against mine."

Sister Sproul had been fidgeting about in her chair for some time, on the alert to fly to the defense of her pet hobby. When Job expressed his opinion of the value of Ah Chung's testimony in so open a manner, the good woman flew to her feet and screamed:

"Brother Chung hez bin teached by Sister Bessie Caldwell fer a long time. He will tell the truth. He hez fer some time bin free from the bonds o' Satan. You ken trust him, brethering."

"I believe Sister Sproul is only a witness in this case, and I object to her interference in the defense," remarked Job; "I wish to see some evidence on the part of Chung that he will not deliberately lie all through his testimony. I know he will beat a woman, and a man who will do that will lie."

"Job, suppose you question him," said the moderator; "perhaps you can get something out of him."

"I've no objections," said Job. "Chung, what you mean by 'gimme h—l?'"

"Oh, you sabe! You gimme h—l one day."

"Oh, that's it, is it; you think Melican man Josh will pound you, eh?"

"Yeah, that so."

"Where is Melican man Josh?"

"Oh, I dunno; him keep him, hey?" inquired Chung, pointing to the pastor.

This was more than even the Rev. Brother Smudgins could bear; he forgot the dignity of the occasion; he forgot the sanctity of the place, and hailed this remark with a hearty guffaw.

"I really think, brethren, that this witness is hardly competent," he suggested, after the laugh subsided a little.

Brother Slowly thought differently.

"If we refuse to right this man's wrongs by refusing to take his account of the affair, we might as well bid farewell to all hopes of influence over them."

Parson Smudgins objected to him, Job strenuously put in his objection, and several of the committee sided with them; but the majority carried the day, and Mr. Slowly proceeded with the examination.

"Mr. Chung, did you ever see this man before?" pointing to Job.

"Yeah; me see him, me feelee him."

"Where did you see him?"

"You sabe, down Chinatown."

"What did he do?"

"He takee my woman, he beatee me, he go gamble; Ah Sing he catchee lot money; I got him allee here," patting his pocket vigorously.

"You have the money he gambled with? Well, give it to the moderator."

"Oh, no! I keepee him. He my money. You no catchee him so. You come play card; you catchee him then, maybe," said Chung, grinning like a pleased monkey.

"He'll give it back to you."

"Oh, no; you sabe; you wantee see him, well you lookee bymby."

"How much money was there?"

"Oh, maybe thirtee dar."

"How long did Job stay in the gambling-house?"

"Job? Me no sabe—he allee same man scratchee self with possheld, eh? Missee Colwel she tellee me."

"No, no! not that Job. I mean this man; how long did he stay?"

"Long time; maybe two hour."

"I don't know as I have anything more to ask the witness. All I wished was to prove that Brother Stearns did go there, and stay and gamble," said Mr. Slowly.

"Well, sir, *I* have some questions to ask him," said Job, contemptuously.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TRIAL CONTINUED.

"Will you tell these men why I took your woman from you, Ah Chung?" said Job.

"I dunno; you wantee her, you takee her," replied Chung.

"Were you not beating her?"

"Me? oh, no! She comee to me; she bringee pickee-handle; she tellee me, 'you sclatchee back,' so me sclatchee; you come in, you beatee me."

"He lie! he lie!" screamed a female voice in the back of the vestry. Everybody turned to see whose it was. The head of Ah Chung's woman poked itself up from behind a settee, where she was hiding.

"'A Daniel come to judgment,' perhaps," suggested the moderator, with a smile.

Ah Chung was about to rush back to the woman, when Job Stearns caught him by the queue.

"No, sir, you don't go until you've unsaid some things you've said here," he muttered, through his clenched teeth.

"He beatee me; this man he come, he savee me. Ah Chung he big liar!" screamed the woman again.

"Bring her forward, Job, if you wish to," said the moderator.

"No, sir, not I. If I can't prove my innocence without

the testimony of a Chinawoman, you may believe what you like about me."

"Littlee man—young Spudee—he play my man game; he leavee lot money!" screamed the irrepressible Chinawoman again.

"She's bound to testify anyhow, Job; you had better bring her forward, and let us hear her," said the pastor again.

"My word, sir, I claim, is worth that of a dozen Chinamen, and if these brethren will not take it, I shall not bolster it up with the word of a heathen."

"Me see him, Spudee, gamble. He leavee lot money. This man he no play. Spudee he pay my man ten dar, he comee here, he tellee lie," squealed the little Chinawoman again.

"Brother Stearns, you must either bring that woman up here in the regular way or put her out."

"Put her out then," said Job carelessly.

Deacon Spud was on his feet in a moment. He grasped the woman by the shoulder, and marched her toward the door, she shouting all the time: "Yeah—me heapee sabe—you no wantee me—he your boy—you no wantee me tellee allee I know—all light, bym-by. He big liar! He big liar!" she yelled, as the vestry door closed upon her.

"Was that your woman, Chung?" asked Job, as she went out.

"Yeah; she mine."

"What do you mean! Is she your slave?"

"She mine. I payee for seven year."

"I've nothing more to say," said Job. "A Chinaman, a liar, a beater of women, and an owner of slaves held for immoral purposes; he's *your* witness, not mine."

Deacon Spud was called and gave his account of the missing money. Job would make no more defense. He was disheartened, disgusted, and in fact, he cared but little how the case went, so bigoted and determined were his enemies. The charges were read to the committee, one by one, and upon all of them a great majority voted "guilty." Great indignation was expressed about town when the news reached the people that Job Stearns was expelled from the church, for such was the result of the trial. Job was a general favorite, and as he was a martyr in the cause of the people, he became a hero, doubly a hero when it became known that he might have saved himself by accepting the testimony of the Chinawoman.

Everybody was surprised that any sensible man should have considered Job guilty after such revelations as were made by Ah Chung's woman, and yet surprised as they were, they could not fail to perceive that it was one victory for the Chinese. Should they allow them to score another? Should they keep still until the pick, the shovel, the plow were taken from their hands? Of course the expulsion of Job from the church meant his discharge from the superintendency of the factories, if it meant anything,

and of course the dismissal of Job was to be only the forerunner of a gradual discharging of the workmen and the employment of Chinese. Deacon Spud soon relieved them of all doubt on that subject, by politely informing Job that "of course his services at the mill were at an end."

The tide of popular excitement ran high. Dire threats were made against the Chinamen. It was not considered a church matter at all; it was a high-handed outrage upon all decent people. The word of a Chinaman had been taken in lieu of that of a respectable, laboring white man, and therefore all laboring white men were indignant.

The champion of the laboring class had become a martyr, therefore the laboring class was furious. The matter of the stolen money was not again referred to. Deacon Spud was not anxious for a legal investigation of the matter in a place where the Chinese were handled without fear or favor. The revelations given, so inopportunely for him, by the Chinese woman, opened his eyes a trifle, and perhaps it was well for Simon Spud that it was so.

Job's friends were not disposed to let the matter drop, and urged him to compel the deacon to retract the charge of theft. Job, however, declared that he should do nothing about it unless the deacon continued to adhere to such an outrageous course, or tried to shield his son Simon by casting the odium on him. There was a harder trial in store for Job, however, than he had yet undergone. Peggy Sproul hastened, the moment the trial of Job was over,

to Mrs. Caldwell's. She found that lady sitting, disconsolately brooding over the rumors which had come to her concerning Job, and wondering, in her fond mother's heart, how she should treat the matter so far as it affected the happiness of her daughter Bessie.

The good lady had had her lesson from the Chinese, and she sympathized with Job in that matter, but she had, nevertheless, great confidence in the wisdom and justice of the brethren of the church, and she could not believe they would, without sufficient cause, sever the connection between Job and the society.

What *should* she do? Certainly her daughter must no longer receive the attentions of a man who could so basely lower himself in the moral scale. Peggy Sproul threw her arms about Sister Caldwell, and a few hard-pressed, perhaps earnest, tears rolled down upon the widow's shoulder.

"'Tez all come out ez I 'spected, Sister Caldwell. Down, down, down, thet mistaken young man hez gone, till now, the last Angul uv Merssy hez a left him."

"What *does* it all mean, Sister Sproul? *Can* it be that Job has done this wicked thing? I have known him from boyhood up, and I can't believe it," replied the weeping widow.

"Why, how ken it be thet he didn't do it," said Peggy. "Brother Spud's unly son sez he saw him. Simon hez bin teeched by pius parents, he never hez telled a lie, he

is 'zemplary en all things. Then thet good, promising young brother from Chiny—the one, you know, your darter hez so int'rested herself in—he sez he saw him. Brother Stearns hez northing ter say. His conshunse troubles him. Ah, my sister, he's clean gone. Thar's no hope."

"Did he have a fair trial?" asked Mrs. Caldwell.

"Oh-h-h, yes. He seemed a kinder tryin' to work on their symp'thies by hidin' that 'ar wicked Chinawoman in the vestry, so'st she cud speak out when he wanted on her; but la! 'twan't no airthly use, they saw through it in a moment, an' Brother Spud he jest yanked her out'n thet in the twinklin' uv an eye," responded Peggy.

"Oh, how could Job do such treacherous, such mean things?" said the widow.

"Of course that's an end ter all his courtin' on your gal, I s'pose?" suggested Peggy.

"I hardly think it ever had gone so far as to amount to courting, Sister Sproul," said the widow, stiffly.

"They say he hez bin payin' on her attentions fer a long time."

"'Tis true he has been intimate with us, but I fancy I have been too careful to permit it to go to any serious lengths. Anyway, my daughter will not break her heart over such a man as Job Stearns has proved himself to be."

Carefully, carefully, Mrs. Caldwell! That flinty-hearted young damsel is this moment vigorously defending Job, to the confusion of Simon Spud, out at the back-gate. That

miscreant had taken no chances upon the possibility of Job seeing Bessie first, and had called at the back-gate to retail his budget of news.

"They've done for him at last, Bessie," said he; "he put the last straw on the camel's back when he played the gallant to that woman of Chung's."

"Simon Spud," asserted Bessie, "if Job Stearns was seen in places where a good man ought not to be, he had good reasons for it. You can't say as much for yourself. What were you doing in Chinatown that you were on hand to witness all this?"

"Me? Oh, perhaps I had good reasons, too, Miss Bessie," replied Simon.

"I don't believe anything good took you down there, and I don't believe anything bad took Job there."

"No; of course not. You will believe anything bad of me, and nothing of the man you've set your heart on," sneered Simon.

"Simon Spud! How dare you talk so? Job Stearns is an honorable man, and I and all honest people will trust him before you, a sneaking eavesdropper and liar."

"I wouldn't stand up for a man who leaves me for a Chinawoman," cried Simon, in anger.

A dash of cold water from the well-dipper was his only answer. It sleeked his hair down nicely back of his ears, and sent a cold shiver along his spinal column. Bessie turned with flaming cheeks and ran into the house, leav-

ing the defeated Simon standing dripping by the gate. Miss Bessie found Peggy Sproul in the house with her mother. She took up a book and sat down with it wrong end up to read—no, to listen—no, to think. Yes, that was it, to think. All her heart was on fire; her sense of justice was outraged; she believed in Job; she wouldn't for a moment lend an ear to the contemptible things they were saying about him. Why hadn't he told her all about it? What was the reason he kept it all to himself? No, she would not let any suspicions prejudice her against him; he was a good, true, pure man, and, and—here she burst into a flood of tears. Peggy stole up behind her and rested her sharp chin on top of her head.

"Poor gal—poor gal! I'm sorry for yer, but the Lud doith all things well," she whispered.

"Go away," said Bessie, giving the chin a shove with her fist, "the Lord did *not* do it, it was *you* and that mean old Simon Spud."

"Bessie! Bessie!" said her mother, mildly.

"It's true, mother," sobbed Bessie, "she has been after him ever since he talked against the Chinamen. She has put Deacon Spud up to distrusting him, and now she comes here to set you against him. Let her go away, I don't want to see her."

"But Bes—," commenced Peggy.

"I won't hear you; go away."

"The good cause de—," recommenced Peggy.

BESSIE REMONSTRATES WITH SIMON.

"I tell you I *won't* hear you say one word about it. It's a crying shame, and you'll get no blessings by it, I can tell you, Peggy Sproul. Don't you ever come whining and pawing around me again, ugh!" said Bessie, with a shrug. She flew out of the room and banged the door after her.

Sister Sproul looked at the widow for a moment in amazement.

"Didn't think she had so much temper," said she.

"She does not act like my Bessie," said the widow, sadly.

"How hard she is a takin' it! What can you do, Sister Caldwell?"

"I shall have to put my foot down, I suppose," said the widow, with a sigh.

"Ter think uv her layin' it ter me!" said Peggy, as she went out.

CHAPTER XII.

BESSIE'S COURAGE.

Mrs. Caldwell went in search of Bessie as soon as Peggy Sproul had gone. She found, rolled up in a heap on her bed, a mass of clothes. Hands, feet, and face were not to be seen. Mrs. Caldwell touched the heap of clothes gently, and said softly, "Bessie?" The bunch shook itself in an impatient way. "Bessie?" said the mother again.

"What, ma?" said a smothered voice.

"Get up, child; I want to talk to you."

Bessie unrolled herself, and exhibited a face red as the rose, and streaked with tear-marks. Mrs. Caldwell put her two hands upon Bessie's shoulders, and said, sadly: "Has it gone so far as this, my child?"

"Oh, mother!" sobbed Bessie, as she buried her face in her mother's bosom.

"Bessie, I pity you; but, my child, you must hide this from all eyes but mine. He is not worthy of you."

"Oh, mother, why will you not trust him until you *know* all about it?" asked Bessie.

"Because, my dear, it is evident he has done wrong; and such wrong as renders him unfit to be suitor for my daughter's hand."

"But, ma, he never has been suitor for my hand."

BESSIE CALDWELL.

"I know, my child, but this little, red face tells its own story. You must have a brave heart, and live it all down."

"Mother," said Bessie, as her teeth set themselves firmly together, "I know you want to do what is right; but so do I, and I mean to stand by Job Stearns until I *know* he is unworthy of my friendship."

"My daughter will do nothing unbecoming a lady, I trust," said the widow.

"I shall do something becoming a friend, mother," firmly.

And she did, too. She sat down and wrote a kind little note to Job, blotted with tears, sympathizing with him, and declaring her confidence in his honor and honesty. She sent the little boy living next door down to Chinatown for Ah Chung's woman. She came. Bessie was closeted with her over an hour. She found out all the facts. She then went to her mother with these facts, but the widow simply expressed surprise at what her daughter had done, and set her heart more firmly than ever against Job. That evening Job called. Mrs. Caldwell received him coldly, and intimated that Bessie was not at home to him, and would not be in future. Bessie heard it all from the back entry, and when Job went out sadly, he felt a little, soft hand touch his arm. He swept the arm around, and gathered a warm little figure close to him.

"Oh, Bessie, dare I tell you now how much I love you?"

"Why not, Job?" asked a smothered voice from his shoulder.

We will not break into the sweet confidences of that moment; let them say the things others have said thousands of times before; let them have the same sweet privacy.

"Bessie! Bessie!" called the shrill voice of the widow, in the house.

But no Bessie answered.

"Where is the child?" said the mother; "where can she be? Bessie!"

"Coming, ma!" replied a voice out at the back-door, and in a moment Bessie came in. The keen-eyed mother detected the change in her daughter's face.

"Did you meet Job, Bessie?" she asked.

"Yes, ma."

"After all I said to you, my daughter! How could you do such a thing?"

"I did right, ma," responded Bessie, flushing.

"Right to disobey your mother! Has that been the kind of teaching you have had?"

"My conscience told me to see him, ma, and my heart says I have done right," said Bessie, flushing deeply.

"Your *heart!* Have you presumed to receive his attentions after I told you not to, Bessie?"

"I can have no secrets from you, mother," said Bessie, looking the widow in the face with a clear eye; "I have pledged my heart to Job Stearns."

Mrs. Caldwell was deeply grieved at this confession. Her daughter, her Bessie, pledged to the man so recently disgraced and ostracized by the church! Could it be possible! This was not her simple, obedient, docile child. It was a woman's eyes she saw looking so calmly at her.

"Well, my child, you have done what you thought was your duty; I shall do what I think is mine," she said, after a few moments' thought; "Job Stearns must not come to my house. If you have any further confidences with him it will be without your mother's consent."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DREAD VISITANT.

Aristocracy street. It was a neat avenue among the oaks, and lined on either side with the dwellings of the well-to-do citizens of Yarbtown. Deacon Spud's mansion was a low one-story house, with broad-spreading wings. It stood on a little hill, back of which was a pleasant little canyon, which the deacon and his neighbors meditated turning to account in shape of a rustic garden.

Ben Levi, the dealer in clothing, cloths, boots and shoes, also added beauty to Aristocracy street with his pleasant semi-Gothic dwelling. Giles, the carpenter, Ghelt, the jeweler, and sundry other moneyed men lived under the shadow of the oaks, and their own vines and fig-trees, on Aristocracy street. The modest house of the Widow Caldwell stood somewhat back of the street, higher on the hill.

This street, with the pasturage hill at one end and the little run behind it, was the pride of Yarbtown; they had macadamized the roadway and filled in the walk with asphaltum, and were proud of every inch of it, from the hill down to where it ended by the little church and schoolhouse.

Chinamen live in communities and never intrude upon the rest of the village. That is true, they do live in communities, and their houses huddle together like sheep in a

sleety storm. John Chinaman seldom intrudes with his hideous houses among the dwellings of the white men; but John likes sightly quarters and elevated places as well as the rest of human kind, and while he does not often intrude with his dwelling, yet we cannot say as much of John's emptyings.

John Chinaman of Yarbtown pitched upon the pasturage hill surmounting Aristocracy street, as a desirable spot upon which to locate. Ready money on one side and obstinate blindness on the other, secured the land for the companies, and one of the most beautiful spots in Yarbtown became John's. Had the people of Yarbtown been sufficiently long-headed, they would have held this land until, under honest white labor, the town had grown up to demand its settlement; but John now had possession of it, so good-by to future improvements in that direction.

"They won't harm us any," said Aristocracy street; "they cling to their own quarters, and as they live higher up the hill than the street runs, we shall suffer no inconvenience from them."

Chinatown began to show it characteristic deference to the hygienic notions of civilized communities. A dark, greasy, nasty, little stream of distilled odds and ends began to steal its way down from the hill through the little canyon behind Aristocracy street. Similar, indeed, was this stream to that which shows itself in their moral influence on society. This foul stream gradually enlarged its borders

until a filthy, putrid pool settled upon the rear of Aristocracy street, as its permanent abiding place.

The denizens of that neighborhood tried first to turn its course into some other direction; then they tried to keep a sewer open; then in vain they dug an open ditch; like the scum in our big cities it obstinately refused to move on. There it remained, generating poisonous gases, exuding obnoxious vapors and defiling the fair face of nature.

Old Dr. Gratiot made frequent visits to Aristocracy street now. Fevers were on the increase; sudden and alarming they were, in their attacks, too. Dr. Gratiot insisted that it was caused by the emptyings from Chinatown.

This was not to be the worst of their troubles, however. A new and dreadful disease showed its horrid visage at Yarbtown; aye, and in Aristocracy street, at that. *Smallpox.* How awfully it sounded to the good people of Yarbtown. Where did it come from? Who brought it?

Dr. Gratiot investigated. It had been existing in the China dens for over a month. No report had ever come, to that effect, from those honorable heathen; they had harbored the dread visitor in their crowded houses, giving neither sign nor warning to others.

Deacon Spud, strange fate, was the first to be stricken down. The yellow flag was flying at his gate, and all Yarbtown gave it and him a wide berth. That precious boy, Simon, was seized with a sudden desire to go to the

bay. Sister Peggy Sproul prized her parchment skin too highly to volunteer to nurse him.

Send for a Chinaman, deacon. They have been your chief resort. Bribe one to come and cook for you now. Pay one to stand over you and oil your scabbed face. Aha! They are not quite so readily obtained now. But who is that who goes in at the gate? Job Stearns! Yes, the noble fellow has seen his opportunity, and he seizes upon it.

"Good Lord!" cried the deacon, when Job strode into the pestilential room, "what ar *you* a doin' here, Job Starns?" "Visiting the afflicted, deacon," said Job, cheerfully.

"Who'd a thought it—who'd a thought it!" múrmured the deacon, burying his head under the bedclothes. Suddenly he pulled the quilt down again and asked, "Ever hed it, Job!"

"No, Deacon Spud."

"Why do you come here then?" asked the deacon, picking the lint off the white coverlid nervously.

"Who else would come, Deacon Spud?"

"Ay! ay! Who else, indeed!" snarled the deacon.

"I don't fear the small-pox, deacon; so rest easy on my account," said Job.

Job busied himself in making some broth at the stove. He hunted about for the cream-tartar; he tucked the deacon up carefully under the bedclothes.

"Job Starns, take yer hat an' go away from here," cried the deacon.

"Won't do it," answered Job, shortly.

"Goin' to pizon me, eh?" asked the deacon, raising himself up quickly on his elbows.

Job turned as quick as a flash to the bedside.

"See here, Deacon Spud, you have injured me as no man ever did before. I might have retaliated; I might have done a hundred things before this to injure you. I am not a coward, that I waited until you were sick and then came to destroy you. My religion teaches me to do good to my enemies. I have come here to save your life, if possible. I will nurse you, and you shall have every comfort; but you must trust me, deacon."

Deacon Spud slowly sank down from his elbows and crawled under the bedclothes again.

CHAPTER XIV.

DUTY VERSUS DUTY.

STRANGE that duty should issue such contradictory commands to different minds concerning the same subject in question. Duty commanded Peggy Sproul to stand by the Chinaman, and Peggy obeyed. Duty commanded Job Stearns to contest their right to intrude upon the inherited hunting-grounds of the whites, and Job obeyed. Duty persuaded Mrs. Caldwell that she ought to interfere with Job Stearns and Bessie, her daughter, and prevent them from making an ill-advised match; on the other hand, Bessie was persuaded that duty demanded that she should be the balm of Job's wounded heart, and she nobly did her duty. A mother's pride had something to do with the anxiety Mrs. Caldwell felt; pride in her daughter's good name; pride in the untainted family honor.

"If Job is not a guilty man," she reasoned, "he is at least under a dark cloud, and grave suspicions are entertained of him."

Bessie, on the other hand, reasoned: "If Job is under a dark cloud, and grave suspicions are entertained of him, he is at least not guilty, and needs my sympathy."

Bessie wondered why Job did not call. Mrs. Caldwell did not wonder; she thought she knew why. Probably the plain truths she had so bluntly told him the last time

he presumed to call, had shamed him into absenting himself.

Bessie was patient, and made no complaints; and yet her heart ached when day after day went by, and no Job came. She had heard of the small-pox in town; but that Job, her Job, had buckled on his armor and gone forth to battle the Apollyon for his enemy, she had not heard.

The bulletin-board of the town, however, Peggy Sproul, soon made her appearance with the news.

"Jest think uv it," said Peggy, as she entered the house, her eyes as big as saucers, and her forehead marked into latitudinal lines; "jest think uv it; thet 'ar repperbate, Job Starns, hez gone inter the deacon's house, to '*nuss* him,' the doctor says. More like to kerwheedle the dear, good man inter leavin' uv his property to him."

"What's that you say," asked the widow, aghast at the idea; "Job Stearns gone to nurse Deacon Spud? Why you must be mistaken, Sister Sproul; Job has never had the small-pox."

"No mustake about it," replied Peggy; "he's thar. Dr. Gratiot told me so. He's never hed it, I know, an' it's onnatral thet he should go thar 'less he hed some idee uv gettin' the better uv the poor de-a-r soul," sniveled Peggy.

Bessie had been turning all colors during this conversation. First, she felt that she should faint; then indignation roused her, and she turned on Peggy Sproul, with eyes bright as stars, her little hands clenched tightly together.

"*You* talk of Job Stearns' motives; you ascribe mean, low reasons for his going to Deacon Spud, in his trouble, when no one else would! *You! you!* Why you have no more comprehension of a noble man's or woman's heart than that chair has, you cruel woman. *You* whine about the de-ar, go-od man as though you loved him as I love Job Stearns, and yet you dare not enter his house to see him in his trouble. You, with your whining and canting, have broken poor Job's heart, and crushed him, and now you are mean enough to trample on him when he is down. You a Christian! *You!* Shame!"

"'Possess thyself with pashunse, 'possess thyself with ashunse," murmured Peggy to herself.

"Do! Yes, *do!*" cried Bessie; "possess yourself, and let other people alone."

"Bessie! Bessie, dear!" interposed Mrs. Caldwell, "remember Sister Sproul is older than you; you shouldn't talk so to one of her years and experience."

All Bessie's combativeness was aroused; there was no curbing her now; she was under full headway; they must fight the fire they have kindled.

"Her *years* and *experience!* Has she lived long enough to know how contemptible it is to strike a foe when he is prostrate? Has she lived long enough to learn that to have a contrary opinion is no crime? You needn't frown at me, ma, and Peggy needn't wrinkle up her forehead, either; she'll have to have more wrinkles before she outgrows her mean, petty spirit."

Mrs. Caldwell rose to her feet, and pointed to the door.

"You had better go, Bessie, and think a little while in your own room," she said, firmly.

Bessie went, and there was a look in her eyes that said she would think, and think as she pleased, too.

"How the dear gal hez changed," said Peggy; "why I thought fer sartin she was agoin' to be one uv our stan'-bys in the werk; but la! she ar' teetotally under the infuence uv Job Starns."

"Sister Sproul, I can't believe that Job is as bad as you seem to think. Perhaps we have all misjudged him," said the widow, thoughtfully.

"Misjedged him? Why, Sister Ca-l-d-w-e-ll! he hed ev'ry show to prove himself innocent," said the astonished Peggy.

"But is it fair to expect a man to prove his innocence? Ought it not to devolve upon us to prove his guilt?"

"Dearee me! Sakes alive! I do b'leeve thet gal is a turnin' you agin' us, too," said Peggy.

"I am turned against nobody, Sister Sproul; I only don't wish to do injustice to an innocent man," answered Mrs. Caldwell.

"Oh, wall, ef yer think him innercent, that ends it all. *I've* nothing more ter say;" and Peggy flounced out of the room.

All this while the much-abused Job Stearns was sitting like a picket in a dangerous position, watching the enemy.

The deacon had been fussy; and who is not in such a position? A nervous, restless, active man; flat on his back; covered with itching scabs, and near, it may be, to the portals of the great unknown. Now he was enjoying a few moments' of rest, under the influence of the powerful narcotic given him. Job was thinking. Why had he come here? Had he not been very foolish, very unwise to risk his life in this way? Why had he not hired some one to come in his place? No, he would not do a kind act and then repent it. He had fought the battle over in in his own mind before coming. He had come; he would stay.

The form of disease which had attacked Deacon Spud was of the most fearful character. It was confluent small-pox. He might die; probably to-day if at all, and then what would become of him—of Job Stearns. He might take the disease and die too. Die! No, he couldn't do that. He *must* not die.

Visions of Bessie's sweet, trusting face came up before him, and visions of the grave—the cold, dreary, lonesome grave.

Death! He wasn't afraid to die; but Bessie—ah, there was the anchor which held him. Great beads of cold sweat stood out all over him; he was fainting—he, big, strong Job Stearns was fainting at the thought of death. Shame!

"Water! water!" murmured the deacon, turning restlessly in his bed.

Job shook himself, and crowded the hideous picture back out of sight in his mind, and was ready for his work again, a strong, self-reliant man. The deacon rolled his eyes in his head piteously toward where Job stood.

"You here yet?" he asked.

"Yes, deacon, I'm here," replied Job, cheerfully.

"Thought you'd a gone 'fore this. Aint yer most afeer'd, Job Starns?"

"No! no! Deacon, don't worry about me."

The old man groaned and turned restlessly from side to side; presently he stretched out his hands towards Job.

"Job Starns, ez it night?"

"No, deacon, it's not dark yet," replied Job.

"Job," he said faintly, "I think I'm a sinkin'; it's dark and my mind ain't jest clar."

"You must look to Him who leads us in the dark, Deacon Spud," counseled Job, as he bathed the old man's face to refresh him.

The somber shades of the evening of delirium were fast gathering around the deacon, to be followed by the dark and more terrible night of death.

"Oh, Job what hev I done ter yer? Ken yer—hi, thar they come, fire-crackers, pigtails; ketch him, Simon—ken yer forgive me, Job?" he cried, piteously; then his eyes rolled wildly as he seemed to catch sight of Simon Spud. "You stole it, yer know yer did, Simon—yes, yes, I know, Job wants the gal, but yer shouldn't let yer old father do this thing—Job Starns! pray! pray!"

Job dropped upon his knees, sobbing like a child—"Great God, wilt thou forgive this man; he has sinned, but he knew not what he did. Have mercy, Lord, for Jesus sake—"

"Amen," cried the deacon.

"Job—Job—quick—here, bend down, I can't talk loud. I never ment to harm yer, Job—I didn't—it was the cursed money. Ay, money, *money*—that hez been my sin. Tell Simon—I say—di—divide it—brethering, he must be guilty. Job, take it—one-half—give me paper—paper—will." The old deacon clutched the bedclothes wildly; for a moment his eyes started fearfully from their sockets—he seemed to be looking far, far away; then they melted suddenly into a sweetness of expression they never had worn in all his life before; then, like the sunset, they went out—out to open in the glorious morning of the new, new world.

Deacon Spud was dead. The mistaken man was at rest. In that last moment the better nature, the faith of the old man crushed the serpent with its heel.

Job had conquered. Himself—the deacon. He had saved his own manhood; he had saved a soul.

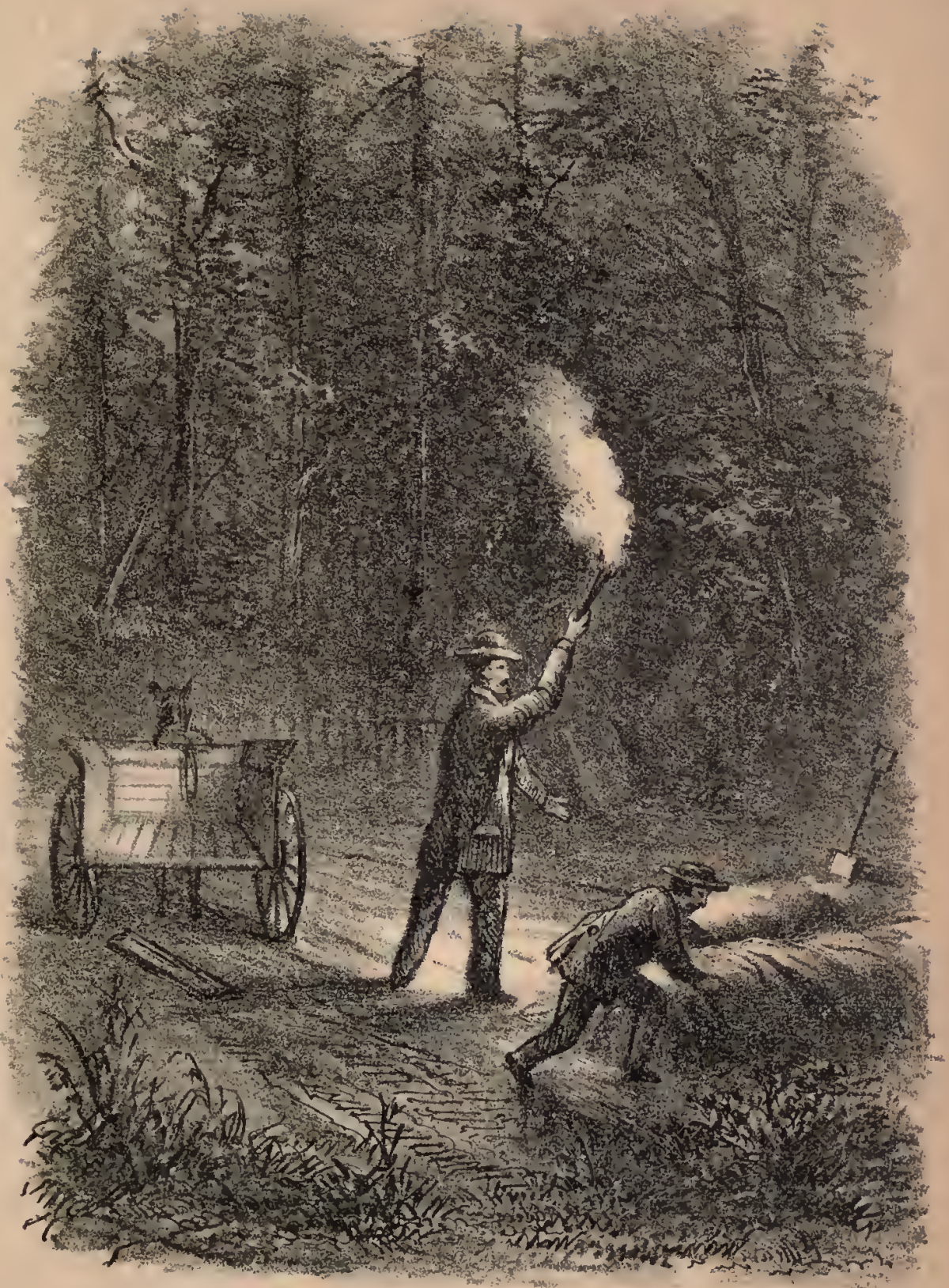
CHAPTER XV.

THE MIDNIGHT FUNERAL.

DEATH is a terrible visitor at any time. When he comes to the father, surrounded by wife and children, he is terrible. When he steals away the patter of the little feet and the prattle of the little tongue, and stills the little, loving heart, he is terrible. In the lone watches of the sea, in the trackless desert, everywhere he is terrible; but how awful he is when clad in his most fearful garb; he comes and drives those most dear to us away, sets the seal of pestilence upon our doorposts, and bears us away unblest by loving hands, unwatched by loving eyes.

Sad, indeed, is the casket when gilded, velveted, and borne by saddened friends. Sadder is the lone, wild, dreary night, when the silent form is hastily shrouded and borne away unmourned, unwept, unsung.

It was midnight; all Yarbtown slept. Cold the winds blew. Dark, the clouds drifted one upon another. A cold drizzling rain was falling. An old dilapidated cart had drawn up at Deacon Spud's gate. Two men silently entered the house. Presently they came out bearing a long black box covered with canvass. They pushed it rudely into the cart and hastily spread the canvass over all. One walked before with a pitch torch, the other mounted the wagon and drove behind. No carriages followed. No long procession wended its way behind it. The horse



THE MIDNIGHT BURIAL.

shumbled along in the mud and darkness, guided by the curses of his driver. They reached the grave-yard and halted beside a newly made grave, and dropped the box roughly upon the ground.

"Tumble the old chap in, Bill!" said the driver coarsely to his companion.

"'Sh, Joe; see there," the sexton replied, pointing up to the sky.

The drizzling rain had ceased suddenly, the clouds had parted like a grand curtain, and as they lowered the box down a meteor shot across the clear space above, then the black clouds rolled together again, and the storm recommenced. Deacon Spud was buried. No priest, no parson, no mourner.

Yes, one. Out from behind a tall oak darted a dark figure. It came to the grave-side and threw in a handful of earth, and a voice repeated, "I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, 'Write, from henceforth blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; ever so, saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labors."

The sexton seized the shovel, and the clods fell upon the coffin. Job Stearns turned and fled into the darkness again.

CHAPTER IVX.

PEGGY GETS VACCINATED.

Sickness is always a serious thing; but to all serious things there is a humorous side. A man suffering with an enlargement of the liver, probably considers himself an object of commiseration; but when that man is a high dignitary of Church or State, and his friends are introduced to his presence while he is swathed in a sheet, and his three hundred pounds of adipose tissue are slopping over the sides of a sitz bath-tub, while he, in the endeavor to preserve his dignity, resembles a good motherly hen setting on her eggs; that is the humorous side of trouble.

Small-pox is no joke. Its presence in a community is anything but a funny affair. But when people lose their balance of reason, and their common sense runs riot; when dignified men and women endeavor to combat it in their several widely-differing ways, then the grim humor of the thing is seen.

Yarbtown was frightened out of its wits during the prevalence of small-pox among the Chinamen. The atmosphere of the village was no longer laden with the odor of blossoming flower-beds, even Aristocracy street no longer drank in the exhilarating effluvia of the China styx. German cologne, Lubin, Florida water—all, all were dreams and essences of the past.

Yarbtown smelled bad. Everybody closed the car

PEGGY'S TRIBULATION.

windows when the train passed through it. The tax collector avoided the place. He wasn't afraid of the small-pox, but the smell, you know, ugh! Carbolic acid, camphor and assafetida were the favorite odors wherewith the good people perfumed themselves.

The doctor said tobacco was a preventative, and everybody took to smoking. It was the millennial to young Yarbtown. Even Parson Smudgins winked at it, and took an occasional public whiff himself. People passed each other on the street under the old boarding-school law of ten feet apart. The hard-working doctor reaped a rich harvest from the sale of vaccine matter. His office was crowded during his business hours.

Peggy Sproul came among the rest. She came in flustrated and red, and charged upon the doctor, with her eyes starting from her head.

"I dew believe, I dew believe I'm a 'goin ter hev 'em, doctor," she cried as she bounced into the room.

"Have them? Have what?" asked the doctor.

"Why, them small-poeks."

"Oh, I guess not, Peggy," responded the doctor, coolly.

"But, oh, doctor, I hev sech a headache when I bend over en this way," said Peggy, suiting her actions to her words, as she nearly rubbed her nose on the worthy doctor's boot bending over.

"And why the d— do you bend over that way?" inquired the astonished M. D.

"An' sech a backache ez I hev em—a-ooh-a!" screamed Peggy.

"Great Napoleon! I should think you *would* have the backache if you twist your spinal column about so."

"What *shall* I dew?"

"Get vaccinated, of course."

"Will it hurt, doctor?"

"Of course; a little, but ain't you woman enough to stand that," asked the doctor.

"Can't I take kerlorerform?" piteously whined Peggy.

"Chloroform! Why, I should think you were going to have an arm sawed off."

Peggy bared an arm about as big as a broom-handle, and took out her smelling-bottle.

"Aho-o-o-o!" she screamed, jumping out of her chair as the doctor opened his lancet.

"Sit still, sit still, I won't hurt you."

Doctor Gratiot took Peggy's arm between his thumb and finger and began to scrape. Then ensued a series of shrieks and groans.

"Peggy, Peggy, I'm ashamed of you. Can't you keep still?" said the doctor as he chased her arm about her head.

"There, it's all done," said he; "it didn't hurt you much, did it?"

But Peggy had fainted.

"Jim, Jim!" shouted the doctor, "fetch in a pail of water."

His boy came in with a big bucket of it.

"Throw a basin of it on her face," said the doctor, winking at Jim.

"No! no! Never mind, I'm all right," squealed Peggy, faintly.

"I thought that would bring her round," he muttered.

Peggy Sproul fanned herself a few minutes, and after a proper time had elapsed, she came to.

"Now, Miss Sproul," said the doctor, "don't be afraid of small-pox and you won't have it.

Miss Sproul straightened out her gown, and tying her sponge of carbolic acid under her chin, started for home. The lesson and instruction which the doctor had given her seemed not to benefit her much, for, although she climbed fences and waded ditches to avoid Chinatown on her way home, yet she was convinced that some plague-smitten Celestial must have put his hand on that very last fence she climbed. She got down her hand-glass the moment she reached home, and peering anxiously into it, discovered three or four minute pimples on her forehead.

"Oh!" she groaned, as she saw them, "I knew I had ketched it. Thar it is fer sure."

She rubbed carbolic acid furiously all over her face and hands.

"Oh, he needn't tell me I hevn't it. My back, oh, how't does ache! Ef 'twan't for the conslations uv religion what'd I dew?"

Poor Peggy, she suffered all the horrors at least of small-pox, in imagination.

"My neck! The back uv it! Aow!"

Peggy pinched and strained that part of herperson to see if she could discover any unusual feeling in that quarter.

"Et's thar! I knew it. Oh, dearee, dearee—an' must I foller the deekun so soon! I must put out a flag ter onct, les some poor creeter come an' ketch it."

She pulled from a cupboard, the bag in which she kept the soiled clothes and picked out of it a dirty, yellow silk handkerchief. She smoothed its wrinkles out on her lap, and some little glittering tear-drops fell down upon it. Poor woman, her sorrows and fears were real to her, and that same tenderness in her nature that made her sometimes, in her impetuosity, weep for others, now brought tears to her eyes for her own griefs.

Alas, Peggy, if you had only felt as deeply for the sorrows of the manly Job! She took the yellow handkerchief and walked like a martyr to the front-gate and pinned it up.

"Thar," she said, as she shut the door with a sigh, "I've done my dooty, anyhow."

Peggy lived alone. She went to her bed aching from head to foot, with no one to take care of her, no kind hand to cool her now almost bursting head. She dare not go out, she might catch cold, she might give the disease to some of her neighbors; so she took a dose of cream of

PEGGY PUTS OUT THE YELLOW FLAG.

tartar, and patiently awaited events, trusting in Providence and her yellow flag.

Fortunately for Peggy, events soon shaped themselves for her. Mr. Smudgins was out making pastoral calls, and as he opened Miss Sproul's front-gate the yellow sentinel fluttered under his hand.

"Wh-a-t! Small-pox here?" He pulled a phial of carbolic acid out of his vest-pocket and washed the hand that touched the dread silk, and hastily lighting a cigar, rushed down-town towards the doctor's office. Dr. Gratiot was busy with his books, and turned round in surprise as the minister rushed in with the cigar still in his mouth.

"Hoi-toi-ti! What's this mean, parson? Smoking? Phew—what next?"

"Has Sister Sproul got the small-pox? he gasped between the puffs of smoke.

"Sister Sproul got the small-pox! Measles! Itch! *No!*" thundered the doctor.

"She's got a flag out," said the parson.

"Got a *flag* out? Why, the woman's crazy," cried the astonished doctor.

"What does it mean?" said the minister, puzzled.

"Mean! Why, she came here to get vaccinated a little while ago, and was scared out of her senses with the notion that she had the small-pox, and I suppose the foolish woman has put the flag out with that idea."

"Well, it strikes me we had better go down and see the

poor woman, and quiet her fears," said the parson meditatively, dropping his cigar into the grate.

"I'll quiet her fears," said Dr. Gratiot, sarcastically, "she'll scare the whole neighborhood." The two professionals walked arm in arm to Peggy's house.

"There it is, sure enough," said the doctor, with a laugh. He pulled the flag off the fence and put it in his pocket.

They knocked at the door. "Who's thar?" said a faint voice inside.

"I—the doctor."

"Come in," said the voice again.

Dr. Gratiot pushed the door open and walked in very softly.

There lay Peggy Sproul on the bed with a load of blankets piled upon her, the sweat rolling down her woe-begone face. A little table stood beside her with a whole apothecary shop on it.

"Humph, that's right, sweat yourself freely."

He took up one bottle after another and smelled the contents.

"Ah, yes; chloride of potash to relieve the nervousness—laudanum—pain—sweet oil—itching—cream-tartar—small-pox. Yes, yes, all right, just the thing. Feel better?" he asked as he felt her pulse.

"No, no! But the parson, send him out'n here."

"He's all right. Had it all, havn't you, parson?" said the doctor.

"Oh, ter think I'd hev the small-pocks. That's it, ain't it, doctor?" inquired Peggy, mournfully.

"Yes. Confluent. Worst kind. Sores all run together. See here and here," said the doctor, pointing to some old scabs on Peggy's head, "terrible, terrible," he said shaking his head; "headache, backache, legs ache, hair all coming out," pointing to Peggy's bald front; "fever, rash, small-pox, small wit, small sense, *fool!*" screamed the doctor.

Peggy sat right up in bed, her eyes snapping fire. "Dew yer mean ter tell me I hain't got it, doctor Grashut?"

"Yes, I do! And more than that, you are making a big fool of yourself besides!" thundered the doctor.

"After all I've borne ter be treated so," snivelled Peggy.

Doctor Gratiot, disgusted, put on his hat and retired, leaving the minister to finish his pastoral call.

CHAPTER XVII.

JOB RETREATS.

THERE was a quaint old fashioned nobility about Job Stearns. He was a frank, open, honest man, with a bluff humor, characteristics which rendered him a general favorite with all who knew him intimately. Job was a fine specimen of the kind of men America can make out of the common stock; thoroughly in love with his country's institutions, believing in the freedom of the American soil to all who can and will assimilate with its offspring.

He thought; and having thought, he based his opinions upon what he decided was the truth. Cant, hollow philosophy, bigotry and maudlin sentimentalism never stirred him one inch from the position he might assume concerning any question. Persecution had failed to do what sentiment could not. Loved by the people, hated by the capitalists, feared by Simon Spud, distrusted by Mrs. Caldwell, and now fresh from a plague-tainted house, Job was in an uncomfortable position.

After he left the grave of Deacon Spud and returned through the driving rain to the house, he felt as though the curse of the leper rested upon him. He must enter no man's house, he must hail no passing friend, he must cool his tongue at no man's well-curb. Job was an outcast. The church closed her doors upon him. The guardian of his love folded her wings around his idol and warned

him off. And now, with the suspicion of possible varioloid resting upon him, he would be shunned by all.

No work, no home; he had better go—go out of the old life into a new. But could he go and not first see Bessie? Yes, he must not risk an interview.

When a suitable time had passed, and all possible danger was gone, he would write to her. Job went out into the deacon's wood-shed and changed his clothes. He took the old ones and made a bon-fire of them. The little tongues of fire in the deacon's garden had speech in them, for they told a tale to a pair of tearful eyes looking out from Bessie Caldwell's window; and, in the light, these same eyes saw the outlined figure of Job standing with folded arms watching the fire. Love is quick to apprehend the truth.

"Ah, he is done with his work. He will go now. Where? Not here. No, no. He will leave town. Brave fellow, he has shown them what courage and manliness he had, and now he will leave, that they may not say *he* spread the disease. He shall not go without seeing me. I *will* see him?"

The face withdrew from the window, the curtain was pulled down, and Bessie carefully changed all her garments and wrapped an old sheet about her, first sprinkling it with carbolic acid.

"He'll think I'm a ghost!" she laughed to herself.

Job had put a change of linen into a big handkerchief,

and knotted the bundle to the end of a walking-stick. He carefully closed all the doors and windows, and started forth again into the stormy night. He could not go without taking one last glimpse at the home of the object most dear to him, so he paused a moment in front of Mrs. Caldwell's house. He heard a latch lift and fall again into its place, and hastily started on.

"Fleeing like a thief in the night," he muttered as he swung out on to the broad road leading through the woods toward Stockton.

Just as he was passing under the spreading branches of a huge oak, he saw a white figure standing behind the trunk.

"Am I dreaming," he said to himself, passing his hand over his forehead, "or has confinement so unnerved me that I see spirits?"

"Job," called a low voice from the figure.

"What—*you*, Bessie?"

"Yes, it's I, Job. May I come to you?"

"No, no, not for the world, Bessie," he cried, moving his hand as though he would push her back, "don't, don't come near me."

"But I *will*, Job. I am not afraid of small-pox; and if you've got it, I want it too."

She ran to him, and in a moment the big arms were clasping the dripping little figure in the sheet.

"Oh, Bessie, what *made* you come out here to see me? Don't you know the danger of it?"

"Why, Job," Bessie sobbed, "did you think I would let you leave and not see you first?"

"It would have been better," replied he, though he held her tightly while he spoke; "but how did you know? I did not tell any one."

"Yes, you did; you told me," pouted Bessie.

"Told you? When?"

"Why, I saw you watching the fire in the deacon's garden, and I knew you were getting ready to go away."

We will not intrude upon the scene which followed. The vows, the promises, the sacred interchange of hearts; let them be the secret of Bessie and Job, and the wild storm. At length Job said, with an effort, "But I must go now, Bessie, I really must," he emphasized as she clung to him still more closely.

"But, oh, Job, if you should have the horrid disease away in the city all alone?" sobbed Bessie, hysterically.

"Why, then the great God who has ever cared for us will take care of me," he replied.

"You will be sure to write me?" said she, timidly.

"Indeed I will," he responded.

The parting? Ah, let the great heart of the big, noble oak under which they stood tell if it dare. What right have I to tell of the long clinging embrace, the kiss, strained through the falling tears.

Job was gone. There he was, like a brave soldier, marching to new conquests for duty, and Bessie was alone.

No, not alone; for, as she retraced her steps homeward, Job turned and followed at a distance. He watched her until the little latch rose and fell again, and then stoically put out on his journey.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SIMON SPUD PLOTS.

While Deacon Spud was being watched and cared for by his enemy, or rather his victim, his affectionate and promising son Simon was spending the parental money, and forgetting the parental admonitions, in the city of San Francisco. He had neither written to, nor heard from his father, since indirectly he had learned that Job Stearns was in attendance upon him.

Simon was by nature incapable of affection ; selfish, self-asserting, without conscience, unscrupulous and ignorant, he constituted a dangerous enemy to Job. He was possessed of no affection for his father, he had no love for Bessie Caldwell, other than that animal passion aroused by her fair face and form.

It is doubtful if he would have persevered in that direction long, had it not been for the opposition of Job, and the self-conscious inferiority he felt, morally, physically and mentally, to his rival. He was determined to out-general his foe. Possess the girl he would. What right had the common foreman of his father's factories to step in between him and the accomplishment of his desires?

Fair means he, Simon, had not skill enough to employ ; foul, he had tried and would try again.

Simon put up at the Lick House. He had used up the city, though it is doubtful if the metropolis felt any the

worse for its using up, and now he was wearied of sight-seeing, and was waiting for some new sensation. San Francisco is a good city to enjoy one's self in; amusements and places of resort suited to all dispositions are to be found there; but Simon Spud's mind was not cast in a large mold, it was narrow, petty, trifling; bed-rock run near the surface.

Two days after Job left Yarbtown, Simon was airing himself and toothpick on the sidewalk in front of the hotel.

"Mighty dull in this confounded city," he said to himself; "if the governor don't get well pretty soon or put out for new diggings, I must have a run down the coast. Wish something would turn up to amuse a fellow. Ought to have a fire or something of the sort once in a while. By Jove, if that isn't Job Stearns over there, I'll be ——!"

It was Job, swinging along like an honest farmer, on the other side of Montgomery street. Simon dropped his toothpick and stared at him a moment, then darted across the street and followed behind Job.

"See where he hangs out to-night, watch him and perhaps he'll play into my hands," said Simon to himself.

Job threaded his way among the crowd to Market street and went into a cheap, respectable lodging-house.

"Spotted," said Simon, as he saw the door close on Job; "and if he sees Yarbtown for another year, my name is not Simon Spud."

Simon had read all the yellow-covered trash of the day,

and his mind was full of the expedients used by the heroes to rid themselves of obnoxious rivals. He was too cowardly to do what his heart was mean enough to do, although he would have been glad to have seen Job's form lying among the stark figures in the Morgue; more than that, he was too much afraid of the muscularity of Job to undertake individually any physical interference with his movements. Simon walked along the streets, wondering how he could, the most securely to himself, remove his rival out of his path.

Whether it was the instinct of the man, or his evil genius, or mere fate, which guided him, cannot be easily ascertained; but certainly his footsteps turned very naturally toward the Barbary Coast, and in a little while Simon found himself on Front street, with the towering masts of the forest of vessels before him. These and the knots of half-drunken sailors around him suggested a means to gratify his desires.

"That's it, I'll be —— if I don't get him whangdoodled, or whatever they call it."

To think was to act with Simon Spud. He seldom thought enough to look ahead to consequences; to have a desire and see before him a way of satisfying it was sufficient. He had wit enough to feel his way a little carefully, however.

Simon walked along the wharves, looking at the ships, until he saw one which seemed about ready to put to sea, and he boarded her.

"Captain aboard?" he asked of one of the foremast hands leaning on the taffrail.

"No, but there's the mate over there," replied the sailor, jerking his thumb over his shoulder, toward the other side of the vessel.

Simon walked across the deck and accosted the man designated as the mate. He asked him if he was about to sail soon.

"Yes, as soon as we get our complement of hands," replied the mate.

"Oh, you are taking in men? Would you like a good stout hand before the mast?"

"Why. do you want to ship, lad?"

The mate scanned Simon's dandy figure from top to bottom.

"Oh no, *I* don't; but I have a man whose constitution would be benefited by a sea voyage," replied Simon.

"H—! We don't want any sick men aboard this craft; why, man, she's bound for Australia. Hands will have to be up and at it on this voyage."

"That suits me; the farther off she goes, the better for me. The fellow isn't sick, he's a strong, healthy landsman," said Simon.

"Oho! You want to ship him whether or no, eh? Dangerous business in San Francisco, my lad," said the mate, shaking his head at Simon as he spoke.

"Pshaw, man, you won't be back for a twelve-months, and you can easily leave him behind."

"Ain't coming back in twelve months. We ship from there to Liverpool," said the mate.

"Then what are you afraid of?" said Simon, "you want hands, and he's a good one."

"Can't do it," replied the mate; "too much risk."

"I'll give you a hundred dollars to get him off for me," said Simon, looking around to see that nobody heard him.

"Now you talk business," said the mate, grinning; "perhaps I can get some of the boys to persuade him to ship."

"You do it and I'll pay you and the men."

"Hand over the shiners, lad, and show us the man."

Simon pulled out his purse and counted out the money and passed it over to the mate.

"Send your men up to the corner of Market and Montgomery to-night at six, and I'll spot him for them; but they must do the rest. I don't want to mix in the matter," he said, as he turned to leave the ship.

"D— coward," said the mate to himself, "wants a dirty job done for him because his coward hands are afraid to touch the fellow; but a hundred dollars ain't to be sneered at."

CHAPTER XIX.

JOB SHANGHAED.

San Francisco was a novelty to Job Stearns, although he had been there several times before.

Rip Van Winkle slept twenty years and came back to find his wife dead, his daughter married and all his old cronies in the grave-yard. The San Franciscan leaves his pet city for one-quarter of that time, and comes back to find his wife gone off with some other man, his old cronies sporting diamond pins and among the fortunate bulls of California street, and the city spread out like an encroaching sea. It makes wonderful strides in a year.

Civilization pushes to new conquests, new fields; barbarism, heathenism, takes the old fields and pushes close on its heels, driving out the lingering remnants of refinement, and forming an impassable barrier against the returning tide of civilization.

Plant tobacco in your field and it destroys the soil for aught else. There must be patient waiting and a thorough renovation of the land before it can again yield the fair and juicy fruit. On some of the best soil of America are Chinese institutions planted.

They poison the earth, they suck the richness, the nourishment out, and leave the impoverished dust, while they return to China to jingle their pockets and laugh in their sleeves at us like Yankee clock-peddlers.

"Marvelous!" exclaimed Job, as he mentally contrasted the city with what it was ten years before. "Marvelous!" as he gazed at the Grand Hotel, the Mint.

Everything had changed. Changed so far as the first few hours' inspection were concerned.

"Wonderful race of men, these Californians."

Yes, it is the men, not circumstances, who have made San Francisco what it is to-day. The brave, enduring, pushing men of the world have congregated there, and their work has been grand. But Job Stearns was destined to take a new view of affairs before another day had gone over his head.

"Chinamen; Chinese influence; Chinese labor;" these were constantly intruding into his thoughts. He would see the Chinatown of the city. He would find out whether he was mistaken in his estimate of their value to California or not. He chose an hour late in the afternoon for his investigation. Disdaining the protection of a policeman, and trusting in his own muscle for protection, he entered Chinese San Francisco. It was like leaving the sunshine and entering the darkest night, as he left the quiet streets and peaceful dwellings of his own race and plunged into the Chinese quarters. Rubbish, garbage of all kinds strewed the walks, and his eyes were saluted by chicken coops, his ears by grunting, filthy hogs.

The very sidewalks sent up their heathenish odors as the planks gave way under his tread. Crowded, teeming full,

were the houses everywhere. Not a doorway, not a window did he see, but that a grinning Chinaman occupied it.

"Well, here is one landmark left," he said, as he caught sight of an old hotel.

He entered the doorway. It was swarming, lousy, with pig-tails.

"Sixty rooms, and a regiment of Chinamen in it."

He went into the temples of worship. Red-faced, long-whiskered, imbecile gods stared at him. He caught glimpses of white boys entering the lowest, vilest haunts, where vice is dealt out for the fractional part of a dollar.

"Phew! Horrors! I suffocate! Let me get down to the Bay and get a breath of fresh air."

He hurried out of Chinatown. He found himself on the "Barbary Coast." Here was white rot. Courtesans, hoodlums, drunkards, swarmed the streets. Job rubbed his eyes.

"Where's the choice?" said he to himself; "is it possible our young men take their first lessons here, as Mr —— says, and then graduate in Chinatown?"

Hold on, Job, don't believe that; *poor* men generally take their first steps at the *cheapest* place. Children's spending money will not buy vice here. There's sophistry, to say the least, in that sentence of Mr. ——'s.

Is Barbary Coast *all* of white San Francisco? Thank God, No! This is but a small proportion of the civilized inhabitants of San Francisco. But *all* Chinatown reeks.

One hundred and fifty thousand Chinamen, out of which perhaps three hundred have been converted to Christianity! Have not more than three hundred white souls paid a price for them? Ay, ten times three hundred!

Away with such fallacy! Shall we flood a whole city with rottenness, in order that we may extract a few valuable gases from it? Ah, Job, you are right. Go ahead—fight fanaticism, fight bigotry, fight the wrong use of capital,—and God bless the right.

Job walked through the streets with his head down, thinking, weighing, and thinking and weighing again.

Three men suddenly stepped up to him and hailed him:

"Hallo, mate, let's have a drink."

Job paid no attention to them, but walked on.

One of them stepped in front of him and leering in his face, said: "Guess we'd better take a wet, hadn't we, eh?"

Job pushed him away with a sniff of contempt, and started to leave them at a brisk walk. The fellow ran up behind him, and with a sudden blow drew a long bag of sand across the back of Job's head.

Stearns fell like a stunned bullock.

"G—, Bill, you've killed him," said one of the men.

"Well, d— him, he needn't have been so d— obstinate."

"What'll we do?" said the other, anxiously, "you know we were to get him drunk an' not hurt him."

The other man was bending over Job, feeling his pulse and heart.

"Hold on, mates, no need to run, he's only stunned. Let's rush him down to the boat before a star comes along."

The men took Job up, and keeping close to the houses, carried him down to the wharf and putting him into the boat in waiting, pulled off to the ship, now lying out in the Bay.

CHAPTER XX.

SIMON ASSAILS THE CITADEL.

When Bessie returned to the house after parting from Job, her heart was filled with conflicting emotions. She had seen Job, and he had sealed their affection with renewed promises; she had seen Job, and he had gone away from her with the sword of Damocles hanging over him. The one remembrance produced the keenest sensation of joy; the other, acute grief and anxiety.

Bessie was a brave girl though, and her courageous heart doubled its fists in determination to suffer and endure, and to await patiently the decrees of Providence. She stole softly into the house, and quietly entering her chamber to avoid awakening her mother, she threw herself upon the bed and gave way to her feelings in a burst of tears. So patient was she as the days went by, that the Widow Caldwell flattered herself the worst was over, and her daughter had by a great effort conquered herself.

Bessie was only waiting; waiting with a heart full of faith in Job; waiting the promised letter. A week had gone, however, and no word had come. Every day the post-office was visited in anxiety.

Simon Spud had returned meanwhile, since all danger was gone, and had assumed control of his father's business. The contemptible whelp presumed upon the absence of Job to begin again his attempts to worm his way into

Bessie's affections. Bouquets and gewgaws began to come to her from unknown sources, followed at last by the presence of Simon himself.

Bessie was a wise little body, and while her whole nature revolted at the approaches of Simon, she remembered that he had come from the great city, and it was just possible that he might have met Job in his wanderings. She determined to play upon the silly fellow's fascination, and work his secret, if he had any, out of him. She was the more decided to pursue this plan, from some hints which the shallow-brained Simon had thrown out since his return, concerning Job. These hints consisted in remarks to the effect that if he told all he knew of the doings of Job Stearns, some people would alter their opinion of him materially.

Simon parted his hair behind, pomaded his goatee and mustache, perfumed himself and called upon Bessie one day, decided upon a direct charge upon her heart. Bessie played the hypocrite well, and received him with marked cordiality.

"Why, Simon, what a stranger you are! I'm so glad to see you. Are you not afraid to catch the small-pox at your house?"

"I don't stay there, you bet, Bessie. I've too much sense to do such a foolish thing," replied Simon.

"How lonesome you must be since your father died," said Bessie, sympathetically.

"Well, 'tis kind of lonesome, but then I'm rich now, Bessie. I've got over a hundred thousand dollars now," said Simon, running his thumb through the button-hole of his lappel.

"Oh my, Simon! You ought to get married now," said Bessie.

"Well, yes, I think I could afford it now, don't you?"

Simon hitched his chair up close to Bessie and crossed one leg over the other. Bessie's heart fluttered anxiously. She anticipated what was coming, but it was too soon; she wanted some information first, so she hastily said:

"Job Stearns took good care of your father, Simon. I wonder where the poor fellow is?"

"I suppose I could tell you if I wanted to."

Simon had a knowing look on his face, as if he had great news to tell.

"I guess he is all right," said Bessie; "he went away to avoid giving the disease to any one."

"The h— he did—I beg pardon, Miss Bessie, but Job is a dissipated fellow," said Simon.

Bessie was on the point of answering the fool according to his folly, but the desire to get news of Job kept her in restraint, so she simply said:

"Why, what new thing has he been doing, Simon?"

"Nothing new," replied Simon, "its the old story. I saw him cavorting around among the Chinese on Dupont street. Job is mighty fond of the Chinese, you know."

"Oh dear, is that so? Did you really see him, and he didn't have the small-pox after all?" said Bessie.

"He? No, not he. Job's a hypocrite, Bessie; all his former friends say so."

Bessie was sure Simon had seen Job, but the rest of the tale went in at one ear and out at the other. The relief to her mind was such, however, that she buried her face in her hands, while the tears of joy streamed through her fingers. Simon attributed these evidences of feeling to a vastly different cause, and put his arm gradually about her waist. Bessie didn't resist; she knew that Job was alive, that's all she wanted of Simon Spud; but the devil in her, and she had one as big as a woodchuck in her eye this moment, tempted her to take revenge upon the man whose perfidy had done so much to destroy Job.

Simon pressed close up to her and whispered:

"Don't you know how much *I* love you, Bessie."

"Oh, yes," murmured the hypocrite.

A thrill ran all through Simon, and his face glowed until the pomade melted on his mustache; he threw himself on his knees in the position he had practiced a hundred times in his own room, and kissed the braid of her dress; then he shoved his fist into his bosom and beating his stomach with the other, said:

"My adorable Bessie, all my heart palpitates with love for you; the angel of my father smiles upon my suit. Oh, be mine, Bessie! I lay my heart, my property, at your feet!"

SIMON SPUD WOOS.

Bessie sighed.

"Won't you answer me, adorable one?" he cried, after waiting a moment; "I pause in agitation. 'Forget the lost Lenore,' and receive me to your bosom!"

"Oh!" sighed Bessie.

She was shaking with suppressed emotion; it was amusement; Simon augured victory. He sprung to his feet and throwing both arms around her neck, tried to implant a kiss on her buried face. Bessie slily closed her fingers tightly over her face, and murmured, with a voice trembling with the laugh which she with difficulty restrained, "Simon, you must not do so, you know."

The artful girl played her cards well; she led him on until his lips were just about to quaff the nectar, and then by a flank movement utterly disconcerted him. Simon was still pursuing her with his endearments when the widow came into the room. She suspected nothing, however, for Simon and Bessie were sitting demurely six feet apart.

When Simon arose to go, Bessie said, "You'll come again to-morrow, Simon, and then you can finish telling me the news about Job Stearns."

Bessie was on a new tack; she had determined to draw Simon out, and see how far he would carry what she knew in her heart to be slanders about Job, and to what lengths he would permit his own folly to lead him. Such a course promised ample revenge upon the scamp.

Simon went out from the presence of Bessie drunk with

happiness, that is, with the kind of happiness such men usually enjoy.

"She had encouraged him. She had virtually accepted him; only the inopportune interruption had prevented her from throwing herself, a free and entire gift, plump into his arms."

Such were the thoughts of Simon Spud as he passed out of the radiance of his shrine; thoughts which sent a vigorous thrill along his backbone, and turned the houses and trees bottom-side up.

He was so full of exuberance that, to keep himself from mounting the steeple of the Presbyterian Church and proclaiming his joy to all the village, he went into the saloon on his way home and drank one glass after another of brandy straight. His tongue loosened itself more and more as he drank, and in half an hour after he left Bessie he was boasting to the crowd of his associates of his feat in out-flanking Job Stearns.

"D— it boys, I knew the girl would accept me. I had only to recall to her mind the estate my father left me, and then, you know, appeal a little to the dear girl's real affection for me—she's dead in love, fellers—and the job was done. Job will have to shine himself up a little 'fore he tries to run that little game against me." Simon scanned his own figure complacently as he spoke.

"You'd better make yourself scarce, Sime, when Job comes back; he'll make mince-meat out'n you," remarked one of the men in response to Simon's boasting.

"Ye-as—*when* he comes back," said Simon, in a maudlin voice.

He continued to drink, and before he left, he recounted the whole story of his call on Bessie. It was not just pleasant to Bessie to hear the next day that she was engaged to Simon Spud. If she had heard also how he had coupled her name with his in a drunken revel at the saloon, she would have hidden her face in shame; but hearing only what she did, she determined to pursue her present course until the conceited, mean-spirited puppy was completely in her toils.

Job had refused to clear himself from the base charges brought against him at the church trial, by using the testimony of Ah Chung's woman; "Perhaps," thought Bessie, "he will use mine, if I can work it out of Simon Spud."

CHAPTER XXI.

GREEK MEETS GREEK.

THE possessions of Deacon Spud had reverted, by his death, to Simon, his son and only heir. The property had increased rapidly with the growth of the town; good buildings had supplanted the shanties formerly used by the deacon, and he had added new industries, one after another, to the original potato factory. Canning and drying of fruits employed, with the other industries, a large number of men and girls at all seasons of the year. Deacon Spud had intended introducing Chinamen into his buildings, hoping thereby to increase his earthly store; but he possessed great keenness of foresight, and proposed making this change as gradually and quietly as possible.

Simon Spud, while he was possessed of the same itching palm, had little of his father's real sharpness. He flattered himself he was sharp, but his sharpness showed its edge too plainly. His plans were shallow, like his mind. In short, Simon Spud was a foolish, blundering, self-conceited, overbearing, incapable man of business. The general plan of his father was known to him, but of its minutiæ he was in ignorance. There is a way of letting men down easily. Deacon Spud understood it; Simon did not.

Government can impose the most obnoxious laws upon a people by a gradual process; but let the Legislature sud-

denly attempt to give such laws to the people and they are in arms in a moment. We can break the unruly bullock to the yoke by a gradual, careful approach, and he becomes used to its touch and resents it but little; approach him, however, suddenly the first time, and cast the yoke about his neck, then we must look out for his horns.

Simon had no knowledge of human nature. One of his first steps, upon assuming control of his father's property, was to suddenly pay off all the white hands and notify them to leave at the end of the week. Before they had left, even, he brought in a horde of Chinamen and placed them under the factory tuition of the Celestials whom his father had before employed. There was an instantaneous rebellion.

The white laborers refused to finish their week's labor. Mutterings, like the growl of the approaching thunderstorm, were heard. The men loitered in groups about the doors and stoned the almond-eyed as they went in and out. A general hue and cry was raised, and the very schoolchildren joined the rebelling army, and pelted the Chinamen on the streets. It was not owing to their natural depravity, altogether; they imbibed the notion that their rights were being taken from them, and took this unchristian way of retaliating.

Acts like those of Simon Spud always produce such results as these among the class of laborers, who, after all, are the backbone of society. Vain attempts were made to

compel the Chinese to relinquish the field; but John Chinaman is grand in his obstinate patience. Openly, they are unresisting. They mutter and shake their fists, but all the while hold tenaciously to the ground. Once in possession of the field of any labor, they are there forever, or until the great arm of the law removes them. They burn all bridges, they never voluntarily retreat.

While these events were transpiring in his business affairs, Simon continued his wooing. Day after day Bessie received him in the most flattering manner. One evening he called after nerving himself with a few glasses of wine. Bessie's nostrils caught the odor; Bessie's eyes saw the glisten of the eye; Bessie's ears detected the volubility of his tongue, and she perceived her opportunity. She permitted his approaches, she allowed him to draw his chair close to her.

"You are in fine spirits to-day, Simon," she said.

"Why shouldn't I be, my darling, with the angel of my heart beside me? Ah, how delightful are these moments, how sweet!" Here he essayed a kiss. She repelled him with:

"No, not now, Simon; perhaps, you know, sometime."

"Bessie," he continued, "did you hear that I have employed Chinamen to work my factories? They cost me only one-half of the former expense. Won't I be rich, now? Won't we know how to spend the shiners, though?"

Bessie curbed her rising indignation and only said:

"Why yes, Simon, you will be rich now."

"You bet!"

"After all, Job Stearns was mistaken in thinking they would only bring trouble, wasn't he?" inquired the sly plotter.

"Now *do* you think so? I *knew* so a long time ago, and between you and me, he would have done a sight of injury to the business if it hadn't been for me," replied Simon.

"Sho! Did you prevent all this mischief? How *did* you do it, dear?"

"Well, of course you won't tell, since my interests are yours, you know," said Simon, with a knowing wink at her; "I just invested a few dollars in Chinatown and completely kerflummerated him."

"Why, do tell! How did you invest it, Simon?" said Bessie, running her fingers through his hair until they each and separately quivered with electricity.

"Sh—let me whisper it, my darling. I paid Ah Chung to go to the church trial and blow on Job," whispered Simon, confidentially.

"Why, how cute," said the outward Bessie, while the inward Bessie ached to lay him on the floor in a different position from the one he assumed a few days before.

"Yes, 'twas cute, though he nearly upset it, all through that blamed woman. She was going to blab the whole affair, but dad saved her that trouble."

"You did outwit him and prevent him from doing lots of harm, didn't you?"

"Bet! Why, you see, such men are dangerous to a community; they rouse the people with their never-ending talk. I did what was fair in war. I had to lose or else he, and as he begun it, why h-e m-u-st t-a-k-e the c-o-n-s-e—"

Simon was fast getting the worst of his potations, and Bessie saw it. She hurriedly said:

"Oh, I must see mother; she's up stairs. Good-night, Simon."

"Go-o-d n-ight, angel," stuttered Simon, and the front door shut behind him.

"Goody! goody! I have it all now. How brilliant to tell it all to *me*, to *me* of all others. Oh, how I ached to tell him what I thought of him! But wait, only *wait*."

Bessie's little fists were doubled up, and in her brave little heart she was pommeling the contemptible fellow who had just left her.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE WARNING.

SIMON SPUD made the great mistake of his life by employing the Chinese in preference to men of his own race. No man can prosper who squares off and makes fight against the country which gave him birth, the institutions which are the foundations of his business. It takes longer for a man to find this out in a large mercantile pursuit than in the petty business of a neighborhood. The returns of retribution come in more slowly, but they *come*.

Even the denizens of Yarbtown who had withdrawn their patronage in the laundry line from Mrs. Caldwell, felt, in their small way, some of the results. The first few times the garments came back in excellent order, but when John monopolized the business, controlled the prices, and had contaminated the reputation of it until no white woman would do such work, then bosoms were scorched. buttons cut off, collars fringed at the edge, and so forth.

Mrs. Caldwell suffered severely from the loss of her business, but she thanked heaven that her people had not yet sunk so low as to patronize boarding-houses kept by Chinamen. She was a willing woman to work, and she set an excellent table, and the Father in whose hands are the lines of the widow and orphan sent her abundance to do. The men of the town, however, were not so fortunate. Their labor taken from them, they found it diffi-

cult to find a lasting substitute. Simon's day was to come. Money for lawsuits, his foes had none. They were not moved by the thought that unlawful deeds of violence might rebound upon them, they thought only of revenge. No man or woman of good sense or judgment favors the taking of the law into one's own hands.

The abuse of Chinamen, the burning and destroying of works in which they are employed, are not only to be deprecated, but vigorously frowned upon. But men have done such things, and as long as human nature remains the same as it is, as long as the provoking cause remains unremedied and unassailed by those in authority, so long will they undoubtedly continue to do, to the sorrow of all good people.

Simon Spud received several letters from unknown sources, sent not through the mail, but under the crack of his door, and containing such implied threats as these:

"The sword of Damocles hangs over you. Discharge the pig-tails, or we will have a dish of roast potatoes."

"Your starch is cold starch, it needs warming."

"Canned fruit is better cooked; keep the yallers and the boys will 'tend to that fer you."

Simon Spud was a coward; these silly threats filled him with alarm, and he slept with a couple of loaded revolvers under his pillow, and bought his whisky by the gallon to avoid the barrooms. Simon was fast becoming a sot; money was too much for him. He dare not stand watch

himself, so he sent out of town and imported a watchman to parade around the factories.

One night Simon was sitting in his room, guzzling his whisky and dreaming maudlin dreams of his future with Bessie, when there came a knock at the door. He roused himself and opened it, when four men came in.

"Good evening, gents; have chairs."

"We can say what we've got to say standing," said one of the men.

"What can I do for you, Bill?" inquired Simon.

"Well, Mr. Spud, there's only one thing we want, and I rather think you'll let us have it, don't you, boys?" he said, turning to the other three.

"You bet," replied the men.

Simon was shaking from head to foot. How foolish a man looks when he is angry and afraid at the same time. Simon was both scared and angry, so he stood trembling with both feelings. He knew what they wanted, and was trying to conjure up some way of escape. At last he asked:

"What is it you want?"

"Well, Sime, to come right straight to the point, we want the pig-tails turned off, and us turned in."

"Not by a—," he was commencing, when he was interrupted by the spokesman of the party.

"We didn't come here to be sworn at, we come like gentlemen, and want a gentleman's answer. We don't

intend to argue the question at all. We are friendly, and wish to save you and ourselves from trouble. Will you, or will you not employ us again?"

"Let me have time to think about it," said Simon; "come here again to-morrow, and I'll let you know."

"Won't do," replied the man; "we want an answer to-night."

"Oh, you are the fellows who sent me the letters, are you? Going to burn me out, are you? Mighty cute to come here and let me see who you are. Go ahead; I've spotted you now," said Simon, gathering courage from the thought.

"We've written you no letters, we never thought of burning you out," replied the man again; "but I'll tell you what we have done and intend to do. We have pledged three-fourths of the farmers and dealers of this neighborhood to sell their produce to us at the same rates at which you buy them, and we have secured capital enough to start us. We intend to go ahead. Now do you understand?"

Simon did understand, but he remembered the cash he had laid away in the bank, and having the same foolish notion as many others, that money can do anything, he laughed in their faces and answered:

"Do you think you can run me out with borrowed capital, when I can count a thousand to your one dollar? Pshaw!"

"We have no borrowed money, but we have capital to back us up. Now, Simon, we give you one more chance to find us honest work in your establishments in the place of your Chinamen. If you don't, we shall go on as we have begun."

Simon breathed more easily when he found that no violence was offered, and he grew bolder; he turned to the men and pointing to the door, said: "Now you git, for I'll be dogoned if I will be browbeat by any man in this town."

The men did not wait for a second invitation to leave, but walked quietly out of the room.

"If they had really meant to burn me out, I might have hired a few to quiet them, but h—, you know, I won't be driven in money matters," muttered Simon, as he sat down to his whisky again.

Simon's fancied security was a dream, for these men did not express the minds and will of the majority. The sword of Damocles was indeed hanging over him. These four men had taken a wise course, and the only one which suggested itself as the most feasible plan. It was strictly legal, it was perfectly fair, and had it been carried out unhindered by the after actions of the excitable element found in all communities, would have brought Simon Spud to terms, without disgracing the neighborhood.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE OPIUM DEN.

It would seem as though Providence intended, concerning the people of Yarbtown. that the measure of their woes should be filled.

Scarcely had the last odors of carbolic acid been dispelled, and while the excitement aroused by the action of Simon Spud was still at high tide, a new matter came to light, which fanned the already increasing flame into a general conflagration. Troubles are gregarious. They seldom come singly and alone. They are energetic pugilists. They never give the heaviest blow first, but feel around a man, until by little touches of the fist here and there they detect the tender spot, then they lay out their strength in one tremendous, crushing blow.

Yarbtown is not an individual, but then troubles treat communities the same collectively as individually. A famine in the land is usually accompanied by great gales, drouths, disasters and grief of various kinds. The first complaint which drew the attention of the people of Yarbtown once more to Chinatown came from the schoolmaster. The boys and girls had been of late uncommonly drowsy and stupid in school. The same enervation had been noticed at home, but was little thought of, or attributed to some simple ailment.

The master, however, was surprised to find numbers of

his scholars in the same condition. He quietly called upon Dr. Gratiot and consulted him as to the possible cause. There seemed to be no epidemic prevailing, and if there were, the symptoms were not those of any disease known to the worthy doctor. The physician was puzzled; he saw no way to get at the difficulty without watching and waiting. The scholars, each and all, denied their sickness, though the signs of their illness were evident to the keen eye of the doctor.

One of the boys of the school was an especial favorite with Dr. Gratiot, and to him the physician applied for assistance. The lad knew nothing as to the cause of the sickness of his playmates, but he promised to watch and report. His report came soon, indeed, and its substance led the doctor to enlist the services of Rev. Mr. Smudgins one evening, and the twain proceeded to Chinatown.

Along the sidewalk they felt their way in the dark, peering into the little windows of the Chinese houses, until they paused in front of one with a dim Chinese lantern hanging over the door. Dr. Gratiot stole up to the window and peeked in.

"Do you see anything?" whispered the minister.

"Phew, no; the atmosphere is blue with smoke; but come here yourself, Smudgins, and look in."

The parson crept up alongside the doctor and pressed his face close to the dirty window-pane. It was a small room into which they looked, resembling the forecastle of a

merchant vessel. Rows of bunks lined two sides. One large one ran along under the little ones on one side. Several Chinamen were lying in the little bunks, while through the floating clouds of smoke, upon the wide one, the two professionals discovered a group of dim figures, not very artistically arranged, either as regards sex or age.

"See that, Smudgins, do you? I fancy that room will reveal secrets that ought by good rights to be ours. Let's go in."

"Ah, do you think—would it be just prudent?" inquired the minister, anxiously.

"Prudent! Why, man, don't you see that those over there are not Chinamen? Indeed, unless my eyes deceive me, they are children."

"Is it possible? The youth of our town inveigled into such a den! What is this? Is it a saloon?" asked the minister.

"Worse than that, worse than that! Come in and we will see what it is."

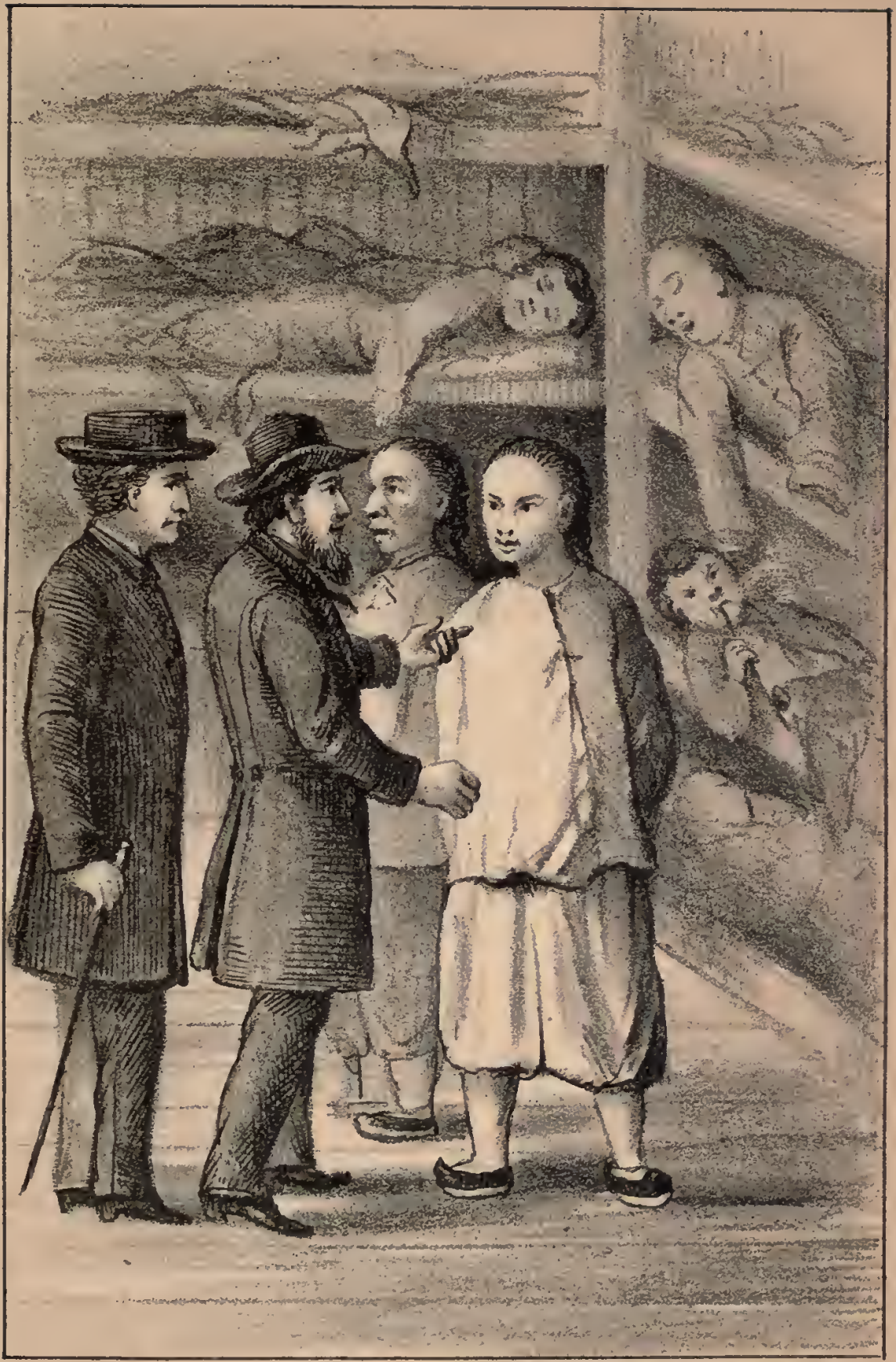
Opening the door, the two men walked in.

"What a smell!" cried the parson; "what in the world is this hole, doctor?"

Just then two Chinamen came forward to see what they wanted.

"How now, Chow," cried the doctor, "whom have you here?"

He was walking toward the shadows seen through the



THE PROFESSIONAL VISIT.

smoke, when Chow hurriedly stepped between him and the group.

"No, no! You no wakee up. Lot Chinamen, all sleepee. Heapee mad you go there."

"Get out!" shouted the doctor, shaking his fist at Chow. "Do you call them Chinamen? Not much you don't."

He walked on as he spoke, shoving Chow out of the way.

"Great mercy!" cried the minister, as his eyes became more accustomed to the dingy darkness.

"There," said the doctor, pointing to the scene before them, "that's what's the matter with the children."

The two professionals stood in silence and looked at the sleeping group. There, scattered promiscuously on the wide couch, with heads and feet intermingling, were young men, boys, and even girls, with also one or two aged men. They were lying in a stupid intoxication, disheveled and in disorder.

"What does it mean?" asked the astonished, confounded minister.

"Opium!" said Dr. Gratiot, with a stern look in his face. He turned and seized Ah Chow by the throat, shoving him along until he held his head over the bench. "Is this your work? What have you been giving them? Opium?

"Yeah; all smokee opium."

"Scoundrel!" shouted the irate physician. "Do you know what I can do to you for this?"

"Me no care," said the Chinaman, doggedly, "payee me—all light, I gim opium, they smokee—who care!"

"How many times have they been here in this fix?"

"Oh, lot time."

"Do they stay all night?" asked the parson.

"Oh, no; bym by all wakee up, then go home."

The doctor tightened his grasp on the throat of Chow a moment, as though he deliberated about strangling him on the spot, but after a moment's reflection he let him go. There were the sons of respectable citizens all stupified by the fumes of opium.

"No wonder they are dull and stupid in school," said the doctor.

On a table in one corner lay an assortment of pipes for opium and tobacco, some lamps and confections. Mr. Smudgins took up one of the pipes and examined it. The stem was about eighteen inches in length and one inch in diameter. The bowl was a broad, flat piece of hard wood, two to three inches across the top, and perforated with a single hole in the center. A little pill as large as a pea is placed on a needle, and the needle thrust into the hole on the bowl. A small lamp is used to ignite the opium, it being a difficult thing to fire. This lamp is applied continually until the requisite number of whiffs have been inhaled.

Rude benches are supplied, upon which the smokers recline during the fumigation, and upon which they remain

undisturbed until the unnatural stupor shall have exhausted itself. All the votaries in the den which the doctor and minister visited were at that time so stupified as to be utterly unconscious of their presence.

"Doctor, this is horrible," said the parson, putting up his hands as if to shut out the dreadful sight.

"Horrible! That is no word for it, Smudgins, its damnable! Between you and me, I am almost afraid to tell the people of this. What will they do? Such a thing as this is not to be borne with, though; I must tell."

"Tell! Of course you will tell. We owe a duty to our fellow-citizens to see that this is carried on no longer."

"I am so in the habit of keeping secrets, professional secrets you know, that I was on the point of considering this one," said Gratiot.

"Here," he continued, "I don't know but what I ought to tell you something else which has a bearing upon this matter."

Mr. Smudgins opened his eyes at this, and intimated his willingness to hear all which might with propriety be told him.

"Well," said Dr. Gratiot," it is strange our people are so blind to the moral influence of these conscienceless heathen, upon the young of our growing State. You are in the habit of preaching, Smudgins, I am not; but if I had your power I could tell them some things which would pull their eyes wide open. Immorality, you know,

is supposed to be beyond the reach of the very young—children I mean. It costs something in our older States to be immoral, and only men can afford to undermine their constitutions by base courses of life; but do you know that these Chinese have done something besides cheapen labor; they have cheapened immorality; brought its evils within reach of the merest child. Among our outcasts of the white race there is a species of honor; they shudder at the thought of dragging a pure child down to their level, and the easiest way to reach their better nature is through a child. No such honor is found among the Chinese. All is fish which comes to their net. The moral principles of our whole State will be undermined. Gad, they are undermined, and our children to-day know more evil, are more familiar with immoral sin than you and I—pardon, parson, I will speak only of myself, more than I did at thirty. This town is no exception. I am under promise at present not to speak further; indeed I never will but to the parents who have a right to know what I know about some of their children, and so help me Aladdin's genii, shall know!"

The two men had left the opium den while talking, and were now on their way home. It will not serve us any purpose to follow either of them. The information which we have obtained by peeping over their shoulders is sufficient. Any one who has lived in California with his eyes and ears open will accept the doctor's statement as a

fair one of facts. It is as though the devil who hitherto has held his fair price for his wares, had suddenly adopted the plan of scattering them broadcast with a free hand.

It is not satisfactory to reply, as some have, that we have an immorality of our own and therefore have no right to criticise that of the Chinese. Our immorality is out of reach of the young; theirs is of a different stamp, cheap—easily indulged in and unhedged by any remains of honor and conscientious scruples. Ours is hidden in gilded temples at whose doors one must knock and pay to enter; theirs is an open pool of filth in whose putrid waters the child may dabble his feet.

Parson Smudgins made no secret of what he had seen and heard, but retailed it as he should have done freely among his friends and parishioners, who in turn were filled with indignation and horror.

CHAPTER XXIV

OLLA PODRIDA.

YARBTOWN was a scene of confusion and excitement on the day following the discovery in the opium den. People who were ordinarily quiet and even-tempered, were gathered in groups on the street corners, discussing earnestly and vehemently the event.

That portion of the community who were ever on the alert for excitement, together with the hoodlums, recommended the taking of extreme and violent measures. Men, whose lives were several removes from rectitude and morality, were astounded at the abyss which opened beneath the feet of their own children. Christians who had hoped great things, expected great things of the Chinamen, stood aghast to think of the great evil which seemed to stand forth as a giant, as compared with the little good they had accomplished. Mothers, who would faint at the sight of blood, and who would plead like a Pocahontas for a condemned man, were loud in their execrations of the Celestials, and in their demands for justice. Justice! What justice can reach men whose tongues are oily with lies, whose consciences can be seen through a needle's eye, and who have no fear of punishment or even death. Yarbtown was determined to do something. Wise counsels prevailed for the present to stay the course of immediate retaliation.

An indignation meeting was announced for the evening. The town hall was filled to overflowing. All Yarbtown turned out; all except the Chinamen. It was with difficulty that the gathering was handled. Noise and confusion prevailed, and dire threats were made of what ought to and should be done very soon.

A strong party of the men whose employment had been taken from them when the Chinese were set at work by Simon Spud, was there ready for anything which should give them a chance to revenge themselves. A great many speeches were made, some cool, calm and deliberate; others hot, earnest and incendiary.

Dr. Gratiot addressed the meeting in a judicious manner, telling of what he saw, and hinted at what he knew, but counseled moderation and an appeal to the law. Rev. Mr. Smudgins also took a similar course; but the headlong, blundering, bloodthirsty class seemed to be in the ascendency, and several rash, heedless speeches were made by them.

Solomon Williams, a hard-working man, who had lost his employment through the insidious development of the cheap labor system, heated and fired the assembly by an impetuous speech, in which he hinted at immediate revenge upon the interloping heathen, as the best method to settle the difficulty. This kind of talk seemed to please the people, for they cheered him vociferously. They seemed in their excitement to have forgotten that this

method would in justice bring down upon themselves the weight of the strong arm of the law.

In the midst of the excitement a man leaped upon the stage and commenced speaking. His face was pale and thin, and covered with a full growth of beard. At first he was taken for a stranger; but a few words from his lips told the assembly that the wanderer, Job Stearns, had returned. He had come into the town that evening, and seeing the lighted hall, went in.

The speech of Sol. Williams had so worked upon his conscienciousness, that before he was aware what he was doing, he was on the platform commencing a speech himself.

"Fellow townsmen: I am not a public speaker, I make no pretensions to eloquence; but I feel impressed with the full import of any measure you may adopt here to-night. There is no need of striving to see who can arouse the most excitement; let us rather try and see who can present his thoughts in the calmest manner. I have suffered as much as most of you, and am entitled to a hearing. Shall I go on?"

"Go ahead, Job!"

"Let 'em have it, Stearns!"

"Pitch in!" shouted the crowd.

"Well, I wish," continued Job, "to present a fair statement of our situation. What are we here for to-night? To see how we can best escape from a net which we have in a measure spread for our own feet."

"No, no, Job; that won't do," shouted a man from the crowd.

"Why not?" said Job; "we want the truth. Our country opened her doors freely for the coming of the Chinese. Thousands came, and still the siren of capital spread out her arms and cried for more. Like a creek they have come down our hillsides, widening and deepening the channel for more to follow. They have covered our fair, verdant plains with the mud and tailings of depravity. Have we ever, as a nation, taken any reasonable, wise course to prevent them? No! Protestations have been made by you and me, and others like us in opinion, but the country whose laws we abide by has encouraged their coming. The dwellers of the East smile at our urgent requests for some restrictive laws. Wait until the miasmatic marsh of Chinese corruption shall have spread into their midst, and then they will open their eyes a trifle. Selfish, greedy men, whose country is bounded by the circumference of a twenty-dollar gold piece have opposed us. Do you think that with such influences to back them, our puny strength can avail if we resort to violence, to force? I say, no!"

"You bet 'twill," cried the excited men.

"There is a wiser course," continued Job; "when we cannot force a man from a claim, we 'freeze him out.' Let us freeze the Chinese out."

"How?" asked some one from the audience.

"Don't patronize them; don't patronize their industries; don't patronize men who employ them. I call that freezing them out. Let us encourage all firms who banish them from the workshop and machines. If our own factories use our produce to further the interests of this class, let us combine and stop their supplies."

"Jest you look out, Job Stearns," shouted Simon Spud from the crowd.

"Free speech is my born right," replied Job, whereat the audience cheered him lustily. "I love my fellow beings of whatever color, but I love my country more. Where I see whole blocks which once were the habitations of citizens whose future was their country's, given over to a horde of miscreants who crowd them to suffocation, who breed disease and contagion, and then hide its results that they may remain unmolested in possession of the field; when I behold a moral whirlpool created by them which sucks in our young blood, then I say it is time to interfere. Either we sink to their level as laborers, or they must rise to ours. The latter is improbable if not impossible. They leave their stains on all they touch. The pride which is born in us revolts at the thought of doing work which has once been given over to them. Let them once be employed to run the cars in our mines, and who among our miners will afterward touch that work? Folly, do you call it? Folly let it be then. It is a fact, and facts are commonly supposed to be stubborn things. If our

workmen will not do such work after it has been contaminated by Chinese hands, let them starve until they will; they must take the consequences of their own folly, sneeringly say our capitalists. I reply that we cannot expect the mass of mankind to be moved by the reason of the few; they are led by feeling. We must treat humanity as we find it. America must concede something to the feelings of her people, her common people, I mean. Is it easier to remodel the American workingman's mind than it is to rid ourselves of the necessity to do so? Are we to destroy his native pride to please the Chinese? The muscles, the united muscles of America's workmen, are in their strength a slumbering volcano. These Chinese feed the rich who have abundance, and starve the poor out of even their poverty."

"Burn 'em out!"

"Cut off their pigtails," shouted the crowd.

"No!" replied Job; "that indeed brings us down to their level. I have no sympathy with such ideas of retribution. They are not to be blamed. It is back of them we must look for the prime cause of our trouble. Commit no crime, I beg of you. I should be one among the first to resent such a course and bring the perpetrators to justice. Let us pursue the slower but more certain plan—appeal and continue to appeal to the law-makers of our land. Agitate the question all the time; never let up. Keep the question always before the nation. Meanwhile freeze them out."

Job quietly left the platform after these remarks, and took a seat in the audience. Many of the gathering did not fully appreciate Job's logic, but they admired Job, and when he moved off the stage three rousing cheers were given for him. There were many mutterings still from the rough, unthinking men present, but the greater number thought Job had taken a sensible view of the matter.

Some strong resolutions were passed and a general committee of ways and means appointed, and the meeting adjourned. As the people passed out, Job fell in with Sol. Williams.

"Sol, I was a little surprised to hear a man of your calmness and good sense advocate such measures as you did tonight."

"Well," said Sol, "has not the question been before the public for the last fifteen years, and are we not further from a solution than ever?"

"Yes," said Job in an uncertain tone. "But there will be organizations yet—bands of earnest, determined men, pledged and sworn to employ and patronize only their brother countrymen. I see ahead the little stream of opposition just starting from its source, grown into a mighty river—too strong to be resisted, too wide, too broad to be stayed in its course. I see my own beautiful State, tilled and served by her own rightful sons. I see happy homes and plenty. I see falling from the clouds of tribulation showers of blessings upon California. Aye, even now I be-

gin to feel a few drops on my face." Job paused suddenly, the moon burst forth from a pile of black clouds, bathing him in light. Sol. Williams saw that the man beside him was inspired — he walked reverently, humbly, feeling a vast gulf between them. Suddenly Job turned, and with a warmth of feeling so common to him, burst out:

"Sol, from my heart I pity you." This broke Sol down. They were just then passing the factory. Sol caught Job by the shoulder and made him face the building.

"You remember how I worked in that place, Job Stearns, under the old deacon; of course I hadn't the education, and couldn't get up as you did, but I came out square and above board, every year; yes, more than square. You remember the year I was married—you was a boy, but you haven't forgotten—well, Jennie and I made a good start. We had a little nest-egg, and Jennie had so much courage and was so smart at anything she put her hand to"—here Sol drew his coat-sleeve across his eyes—"when the boy came, we both just put our shoulders to the wheel and worked, God knows how we worked, and hoped and prayed for that boy. Jennie said—of course she was proud, poor thing—but she said that he should have the same chance as the deacon's son; and just a little after the girl came. Of course then it was uphill work. I suppose we, poor people, had no business, but somehow Jennie would have the children dressed well, and she would send them to the best school, and all that. Well,

she was shrewd, and we saved every year a little toward the boy and college, and the girl and a piano. Yes, you laugh, Job; I suppose we'd no business with aspirations; we'd never had any chance ourselves, you know. Of course it was foolish, and it all looks ridiculous to me now. Well, you know the rest; we've used it all up, and the old dresses are wearing out, and the flour barrel is getting low. Maybe I could have borne it better if Jennie hadn't taken it so hard. She fought like a tiger to save that money. She worked herself at everything, night and day, sewing and washing, but at last somehow the work didn't come, and then the money went to keep the children from starving, and Jennie's completely broken down—"

Here Job broke in.

"Sol, I can't stand this. God pity us all," and wringing his hand, he darted round the street corner and left Sol in the moonlight. Job made a bee-line for Bessie Caldwell's. There was sympathy, rest, sunshine after darkness. A few turns more and the house would be reached. His heart was beating wildly, when plump he came upon Uncle Caleb Green, one of the oracles of the place.

"Well, Job, so ye's back, are ye, but a little too late in the day, I reckun."

"What now?" replied Job, rather crustily.

"Why, Sime Spud has jest taken a seat in your chair, cut you out jest the slickest. I did think the gal had more

strength of character, but them shiners of his'n are kinder dazzling, you know."

Job was turned into a pillar of stone; his tongue was paralyzed; he just stood and stared at Caleb Green with eyes that were incapable of moving in his head.

"Now, now, old boy, don't take it so hard; there's more fish in the pond, you know;" and Caleb moved off, a little conscience-stricken, leaving Job frozen into ice on the street corner.

CHAPTER XXV.

BESSIE'S CONFESSION.

Job was almost a broken man after his conversation with Sol. Williams and Caleb Green. He avoided Mrs. Caldwell's, of course, striving all the time to learn to hate Bessie. "Fine girl," he said, "to follow a man out into the rain and night, and then to take advantage of his absence to go over to the enemy." Poor Bessie. She couldn't hate Job, try as she might; but she was bitter toward him and proud. So the two were miserable; but fate took the matter in hand, and brought them face to face on the street. Bessie was the weaker vessel, and she yielded first. "O Job!" The little red under-lip pouted like that of an injured child, and the big blue eyes were running over with tears. Had Bessie been as false as she was fair, the pleading baby-face would have been too much for Job. Pride melted like ice in the sun; he just drew the little white hand through his arm, and walked silently by her side out of the town, under the shadow of the great hills and trees. Then Job open his lips for the first time. "Well, Bessie." A stifled sob was the only answer. Job was driven to the wall, and he burst forth. "O, Bessie, what have I done; why have you rejected a good man's love for the money of his enemy?" Then it all flashed over Bessie. Job had reason to doubt her, so they sat down under a big pine tree and talked it all over. Bessie told Job with sobs

and tears, how true she had been to him, that she had even sacrificed self-respect for his sake. Before she was half through her story, Job stopped her mouth with kisses; winds from the south were blowing through his brown hair once more; sunlight danced on the leaves; the sky had the blue of Italy. His manhood had returned to him; he fairly lifted Bessie in his arms, and would have carried her like a fairy queen, so light she seemed.

Bessie had told him of the secrets that Simon Spud had revealed to her, and Job felt that his little heroine had furnished and equipped him with arms for the contest—a musket, pistol and sword, with which to successfully fight the enemy. Then Bessie impatiently begged Job to tell her the story of his wanderings, and the reason of his long silence. In a few words he told of his meeting with the strange men in San Francisco. "And then," said he, "Bessie, I remembered nothing more for hours, it might have been days. I was conscious first of a bursting feeling in my head, and a desire for air; opening my eyes, I found myself in the cabin of a ship. Then it flashed across my mind that I had been 'shanghaed,' as they call it. I knew by the motion of the vessel that I was far out at sea, and with this thought came a vision of you, Bessie—the whole past, the bitter past, rushed over me like a flood; I grew desperate with thinking; this last blow was too heavy. I would end all my troubles now and forever; a long quiet sleep way down among the sea-weeds and corals of the

blue Pacific; the thought was balm. I turned the idea over and over in my mind; the longer I meditated upon it, the pleasanter it seemed; I even planned just when and how I should commit the deed. I was intoxicated with the thought, when, dear, for the second time in my life, I saw a ghost. Now, don't start. It was the ghost of yourself, Bessie, but as real as your little soft hand is to me now. You had the same sheet about you that you wore the night I bade you good-bye, and your face was swollen with crying. You were not a pale ghost, Bessie, only so sad and woe-begone and forsaken like. You stayed with me but a moment, but you electrified me like a shock from a galvanic battery; I was a well, strong man in an instant. Coward, I said to myself, springing to my feet, you mean, contemptible coward, you are unworthy of the girl. Well, darling, I was the shrewdest, sharpest man on board the Clyde after that, I reckon. I just worked myself into the affections and good graces of the captain, mates, sailors and cook. I worked, sang, told stories, smoked tobacco, and became a regular salt"—here Bessie looked Job all over with curiosity. "There was one fellow on board, Pete Smith; I worked into that chap's sympathies somehow. Well, one night, when we were off the Sandwich Islands, under the influence of a good smoke and plenty of whisky, he told me all about my capture, and described the dandy fellow with the little legs, who made the bargain; he did not know his name, he said; but I did,

Bessie. Well, I worked on after that, but kept dark as to my intentions. When our ship's crew put out from port at the Sandwich Islands, I was among the missing. You can guess the rest. I worked my passage back to San Francisco on a returning ship. O, Bessie, did you wonder why you never received that letter I promised?"

Bessie's lip was trembling again. "The worst of it was, Job, I had no one to confide in. I felt that you were true, and had some good reason for keeping silent, but I couldn't tell mother, and God seemed to have forgotten me; perhaps it was because I was a wicked girl then; I was playing hypocrite with Simon."

"Well," said Job, "it is all over now, darling. So let us have done with deception forever."

CHAPTER XXVI.

SIMON HAS HIS EYES OPENED.

SIMON SPUD must have been blind indeed had he failed to perceive the cordial welcome given the returned wanderer by Miss Bessie Caldwell. He was too conceited to imagine at first that he had been supplanted by the man who had been so disgraced. Had he not revealed Job's character to her in the clearest manner? It could not be that Job suspected him of being the originator of the scheme for his forcible shipment. Job had returned considerably sooner than he had expected; that alarmed him some. Perhaps the mate had betrayed him to Stearns. He could not for a moment think that Bessie, after such encouragement as she had given him, could be in earnest in her friendly greeting of Job. Probably she had some motive in thus acting; some plan for assisting him, Simon, in his warfare against Job. Anyway he would call upon her and ascertain; so one evening he spruced up and called at the house of the widow. Bessie received him alone in the parlor. Simon was nervous and vaulted immediately upon his war-horse.

"Bessie, do you think it fair to me, for you to receive calls from Job Stearns after all I have told you?"

There was a dangerous look in Bessie's eyes, as she replied, "And why not, pray?"

"Ain't it settled that my interests are your'n? 'Tain't

for my interest that that man's name should again be associated with your'n. Probably you have some plan in view which you think will assist me in curbing that scoundrel, and thinking so, you let him come so as you can work his plans out of him; but it won't help me any, though I'm much obliged."

Bessie had tried to be cool and collected, but her natural feelings were too strong for her and she showed her hand in the game rather sooner than she intended.

"I'd like to know, Simon Spud, how long your interests have been mine? I'd like to know how long since I gave you a right to dictate to me?" she cried, with flashing eyes.

"Why, since you accepted my offer, of course," said the astonished Simon.

"What offer have I accepted?" screamed Bessie.

"Didn't you promise to marry me?" asked Simon.

"Marry *you!* No—not if you were the last man in the world, I wouldn't!"

"You promised to," said the now angry Simon.

"I didn't."

"You implied as much. Haven't you let me come to see you? Haven't you listened to my vows and offers, and never said 'no?'"

"Because I did not say 'no,' that does not imply 'yes'. Yes, I have let you come to see me, and I have listened to your vows of love, but I've listened to something else, too. I've heard how you betrayed poor Job, and I've encour-

aged you on so that I would fathom your mean, contemptible spirit, and it did not take long either, it's so absurdly shallow. I know you now, Simon Spud."

Simon was immeasurably wrathy, he choked and turned alternately red and white; he sprang forward toward Bessie, screaming:

"You shall marry me! I have you in my power. I'll ruin your good name; I'll sue you for breach of promise, I'll——"

"That will do, Simon," shouted the manly voice of Job Stearns, as he came bounding into the room. "You've said enough. You can commence a suit for breach of promise just as soon as you please, and I will match it with two suits; one for having me shanghaed, and one for slander. Now, sir, with Bessie's permission, I will show you the way out."

"Do, Job, but don't hurt him," said Bessie.

Simon Spud was dumbfounded, completely at his wit's end; he made no reply, but took his hat mechanically and walked out.

"Wasn't that rich?" said Bessie, laughing hysterically; then she immediately fell to crying with all her might.

"What have I done? How I have lowered myself! But I did do it, Job, to save your name. I never meant to go so far. What will mamma say," she sobbed?

"She will say her little daughter did just right," said Job gathering her into his arms, and cramming his handkerchief into her face.

"But, Job, if he should sue me for breach of p-r-o-m-i-s-e, just think of the publicity of it," she sobbed, with a smothered voice between Job's intermittent hugs. Job laughed.

"The puppy! No lawyer would undertake such a case, you need not fear; besides he knows that I have him in my power now."

Mrs. Caldwell did say her daughter had acted right, when the whole story of Simon's perfidy was told her, though she could have wished her daughter had placed more confidence in her.

"I did try to, ma, but you would not listen to me," replied Bessie.

Simon was in a bad strait; enemies all around him, his crimes exposed, and the prospect before him of an opposition to his business. A mean man is always conscious of the superiority of an honest one. Simon felt his inferiority to Job Stearns. He was afraid of him. He knew that if Job should press the matter in the courts, he, Simon, would without question be defeated. Job was not a hard man, but he felt that he had been pushed to extremities; he did not wish to revenge himself upon Simon, but he was determined to have a fair settlement of the matter, right himself in the estimation of such as had mistrusted him, and receive fair compensation for the time he had unjustly lost by Simon's treachery and crime. He put his case into the hands of a lawyer, and Simon forthwith received a letter asking for damages. Simon squirmed. He dare not con-

sult an attorney; he was too cowardly to tell honestly all the facts, so he waited and continued to squirm. He finally, upon receipt of another letter rather more peremptory in its demands, called upon the lawyer. He begged, threatened, whined, crawled, apologised, but Job's lawyer stood his ground firmly. At last, rather than to have the matter ventilated in court, Simon compromised with Job, by paying over to the attorney the sum of five thousand dollars. It nearly killed him with vexation to squeeze out of his pocket so much to his enemy, but it had to be done.

Job was now enabled, by means of the failure of his enemy's plans, to unite his means with those of the four men who proposed to start the opposition in Yarbtown.

The buildings were already in process of erection, and Job was chosen superintendent. Public opinion and patronage favored them, and Simon's capital was insufficient to combat their prosperity. Job was now on the road to wealth. One of the stipulations which his attorney had made in the settlement with Simon Spud, required that a public statement of the compromise and its causes should be made by the lawyer. It was done, and Peggy Sproul and all the church people came down from their high horses and greeted Job with friendliness.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FIRE! FIRE!

A MONTH had passed since the indignation meeting in Yarbtown, and nothing had been done by the committee, beyond making some mild remonstrances with the Chinamen. Great heat as long as the bellows are blowed, and ashes when they are not.

Nobody wished to move in the matter, and nobody did. The mass of the people had suffered their ardor to cool off, and imagined—poor mistaken souls—that the scare had been sufficient to deter the Celestials from any further open digressions from the moral law; but "For ways that are dark and tricks that are vain, the heathen Chinee is peculiar."

They had been permitted so long to carry on their nefarious business without serious interference, that when the wrath of the people had apparently spent itself, they smiled quietly at each other, and went on as before, doing as they pleased.

There were some others in Yarbtown who, sometimes, indulged in the practice of doing as they pleased also. There were men whose wrath rose within them every time they saw the peaceful, bland, contented face of John; men who instinctively stooped to pick up a stone every time one of these industrious heathen passed with his baskets teeming with clothes, a shovel over his shoulder, or hurry-

ing to and from his work at the factory. The nonchalant, self-satisfied air of John, his mincing, half-trotting, half-shuffling gait, contrasted with their own misery, provoked them to efforts to bring some of their own suffering down upon poor John's head. They stoned them, pestered and bothered them, insulted them with vile language, and made the streets of Yarbtown a perfect hell upon earth to John Chinaman.

All this finally reached a climax, fearful and grievous to the celestials. It was China New Year. The heathen were out in gala costume.

A stranger passing through the town might have imagined a great battle in progress. The atmosphere was filled with the smell of gunpowder, and the noise of constant explosion of fire-crackers was distracting to the sleepers on Aristocracy street. A procession marched and countermarched, clad in robes and fancy dress, and bearing aloft transparencies and banners. In the various houses of the Chinese, some were prognosticating their future from the sweet smelling blossoms and stalks of the narcissus; others were feasting upon sweetmeats, condiments and preserved ginger, and still others were staking the savings of months at the various gaming tables.

"Makee big noisee, scaree way heap debbils," said one of them to an inquiring white man.

There were some devils, however, in Yarbtown, who were not so easily scared; they needed an application of

gunpowder after a different fashion from the fire-crackers, to accomplish their ejection. While John was at work with his devils in front, these devils were at work in the rear of Chinatown. They had chosen an auspicious time for their exploit. Amid the noise, confusion and smell, their presence was not perceived, the odor of kerosene was not noticed, and the consequent smoke of the fire was unheeded, until one-third of Chinatown was in flames among the sheds of the rear.

John Chinaman is noisy and demonstrative in his fun; he is fearfully so in his grief. Such jabbering, such yelling, never was heard in Yarbtown. They fought, stumbled over each other, and made no effort to stay the flames. Little Chinese women, never seen by the eyes of civilized Yarbtown before, came running into the streets, with minute celestials clinging to them. The penates and Josh were brought out of the flames; but Chinatown was doomed. In less than two hours it was for the most part in ashes.

Job Stearns was among the crowd gathered in Chinatown, and many were the valuable articles he saved from the flames. He came nearer to swearing that night than ever before in his life; not at the terrible suffering which he witnessed, but at the reckless, headstrong causes of it.

While nearly the whole population was gathered in Chinatown, the cry of "Fire!" came from the other end of the village. The buildings belonging to Simon Spud

were in flames. Despite their hatred of Simon, a great many made efforts to save the stock in store; but the buildings were of combustible material and burned so rapidly as to give them no opportunity. Simon was out in the crowd, howling and dancing about like a madman. His accounts, books, government bonds and valuables were all in the office. He had been either too parsimonious or too careless to secure a good safe, and they were therefore protected by nothing save the old iron box used by his father. It was worse than nothing so far as fire was concerned.

"O, do somebody go up and get my iron box in the office," he cried to the men about him.

"Go yourself, Sime, you know where it is," they replied, jeeringly.

"One hundred dollars to the man who will save it for me," cried Simon, again.

"Be all your bonds, papers and books in that thar office, Simon? All?" asked one man, peering into his face.

"Yes, yes, all of them. Do go up and get them," answered Simon, nervously.

"Be you sure you haven't saved some of your bonds out?" asked the man again.

"No, no, they are all there. I must save them."

"Then, by ——, I'll put a head on the first man who goes up to get them. You bet I mean it too, fellows. Don't none o' you uns try me," shouted the man who had

interrogated him. "You've had your play, Sime, and now we'll cry quits."

Job Stearns was standing close by in the crowd which had gathered, and he overheard Simon's lament, and started immediately for the building. He darted into the hall, and finding the smoke stifling, he seized a potato sack, pulled it over his head, and rushed up stairs. With one kick from his muscular legs, he burst in the door of the office. He found the box. It was locked. He felt the floor giving way under him, so he bent all his energy, balanced the box on the sill of the window, and dropped it out.

It fell upon the ground beneath. Simon Spud saw it, and in a moment had the papers and books in his possession. Job started to go back, but the stairs had fallen in. He must follow the strong box. He felt his way to the window and looked out. It was twenty feet to the ground. He looked once more down into the raging, red, glowing furnace where the stairs had been, and then swung himself out on the window-sill. For one moment he glanced down into the darkness, then shut his eyes and dropped.

The crowd rushed forward. Job lay senseless under the window.

"All for that confounded rascal!"

"I said I'd put a head on to any man who went up; but dogon me if I thought 'twould be Job Stearns."

"What the —— did he go up for, I'd like to know?

I'd have seen the whole shebang to blazes before I would risk my life for the skunk who had treated me as he has Stearns."

Such were the comments of the men, as they lifted Job up and placed him on an unhinged door.

"Whar's Sime?" asked one. "Why don't the pup come and see what's the matter?"

But Simon was off to his room to put his valuables in safe lodgment.

While these events were transpiring, poor Peggy Sproul was in an agony of fear. She had been all the afternoon, while Chinatown scared away its devils, alternately reading of Elijah and the Priests of Baal, and looking out her window to see the abominations of the heathen; and now, while the whole town was lighted up with fire, the poor, lone woman knew not what to do. She ran back and forth between her neighbor's houses, trying in vain to find some one to condole with; they were gone to see the display.

"Oh-ooh-ah!" she cried, wringing her hands in agony, "my house will go, an' I shall be a lone an' humless woman. Oh, why don't somebody come an' help me! I must git my things out'n thar ter onct."

Peggy run into the house again, and bustled excitedly about, but where to begin, she knew not. Looking around, she saw the end of the rag-bag sticking out of the open closet.

"Oh, my rags; all of them is wooling things I'd a saved to make inter rugs."

She bundled the rag-bag out of the front door, and rushed back again.

"Thar's my flat-irons!"

Out they went after the rags.

"An' thar's my books; I never could kerplace them agin. I must save 'em."

She did the books up in a paper, a copy of Fox's Book of Martyrs, Baxter, Life of Washington, and the good Book, and set them on the gate-post.

"An' thar's my presarve tins; they cost me three dollars; they must go. Oh, dearee me! why was I left all alone ter see everything burned teetotally down right under my nose. An' thar's my ironing-board, an' the pictur of the Lord's Supper."

She put them all out into the street, and rushed in again. Peggy had her savings all put into a stocking, and the stocking hid in the mattress; she also had some silverware; but in her excitement, the memory of them faded from her mind. She seized the rolling-pin, nutmeg-grater and pie-pans, and threw them out of the window.

"Them ar winder curtings; I paid two bits a yard fer 'em, six uv 'em; hum, one dollar'n'arf. I must save 'em; they'll go like tinder."

She rolled them up and laid them carefully on the sidewalk. As she looked up, she saw the flames on the other side of her house, but across the town.

"Oh, thar's tother side! I must git back inter the bedroom 'fore it gits a holt thar."

She hastened through the house and pushed open the bedroom door. The first thing she saw was her night-cap sticking out from under the pillow.

"That ar ez raal lace. Oh, when shall I ever sleep in peace agin with it on?"

She took it out, and to keep it out of the dirt, put it on the unoccupied gate-post. Two China vases, the looking-glass, comb and hair-brush, went out to get an airing next. About this time the neighbors began to come home. As they came up toward Peggy's with their lanterns, one of them spied what he thought was a figure with a night-cap on.

"I declare if there isn't Peggy Sproul with her cap on."

Just then his foot caught in a flat-iron, and he sprawled out on the rag-bag.

"What under the—"

"It's only—" began another, as he executed a graceful bow on the ironing-board, and put his elbow through the looking-glass, while the hair-brush dug into his ear. They both got up, and swung their lanterns around to discover the cause of their downfall.

"Whew! who's been robbing Peggy?"

Just then Peggy herself came out with an armful of stove-pipe.

"What in the world are you doing, Peggy Sproul?" asked one of the men.

"Yes, you come back when thar's no more to be did, an' ask a poor woman what she's a doin' uv when she's emptied her whole house alone ter save it."

"I should say you had. Have you brought out your toothpicks yet? Why, what are you pulling all this rubbish out here for?"

"*Rubbish!* I'd hev you know them things is valable; I don't want 'em burned."

"Who's going to burn them?" asked one of the neighbors.

"Why," said Peggy, "don't you see the fire all around us?"

"I want to know if it is because you were afraid of being burned out, that you packed all this stuff out?"

"Sartin'; uv course," said Peggy.

"Well, you'd better pack 'em straight in again before the rest of them get smashed."

"Smashed! Thar aint none uv 'em smashed."

"Well, I guess you'll find your looking-glass a goner; I smashed that."

"My lookin'-glass broken! My lookin'-glass!" cried Peggy, lifting her hands in horror; "then I shall die. Oh, dearee, dearee." Peggy sat down on the rag-bag and rocked to and fro. "Ter hev a lookin'-glass smashed when thar's a fire in town. Oh, I know I shall die. I never broke one 'thout—'thout—well, some one a dyin'."

"There, there, Peggy, if any one dies for it, it will be I, for I smashed it," said her neighbor, soothingly.

"Well, the Lud's will be done," said Peggy, rising resignedly to meet her fate.

"Now, you don't think the Lord descends to such petty signs as that, do you, Peggy?"

"Oh, I don' know, I don' know; thar's no fathoming o' his ways."

"Well, Peggy, I'm a Christian, I hope, and if that's a sign of my death, I'm ready; but let's put these things in before the rest of the town is doomed to die."

"Ain't thar no danger, now, raally?"

"Of course not; don't you see it's all at the other side of the town?"

"Well, well, I hev the consolation of hevin' done all I could."

The three went to work immediately to undo all that Peggy had done.

* * * * * * * *

Job was carried to the hotel, and Dr. Gratiot called in. He found one leg broken below the knee, but no bruises or wounds of a serious character. People wondered if Simon Spud would do anything to repay Job for his suffering in his cause; but he did nothing beyond sending him a check for the hundred dollars promised, which Job quietly returned to him. Those who knew the mean, petty nature of Simon Spud, did not wonder much at his lack of gratitude.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE WEDDING.

I AM aware that there is no more old-fashioned method of disposing of heroes and heroines who have served the purposes for which they were introduced, than to marry them off; I do not wish, however, to present so much of the shadow in the life of Job or Bessie, without adding a little of the sunshine.

Of course it might safely be left to the imagination of the reader to picture the wedding, the cottage and the triumph of these much-abused characters of my story, but I prefer to be a little old-fashioned, and tell it myself. There was no chime in the steeple of the Presbyterian church, but the "mellow wedding-bells" were ringing in Job's heart all the while.

He swung his arms six inches further, and stepped more firmly than ever before. He was a proud man. There was no rejoicing over the moral defeat of his enemies; no chuckling over the discomfiture of Sime; no unkind, revengeful feeling toward Peggy. The mantle of charity stretched with the rebound from despair to hope. And yet Job could not help indulging his pride a trifle.

He was proud of winning Bessie against tremendous odds; proud because his prognostications of the future of the Chinese in Yarbtown had been proven to be correct, and proud because his great disgrace had brought him

greater honor. Job was to be married. The widow, with tears in her eyes, had confessed her error in opposing him, and had given a hearty consent to an early union.

Parson Smudgins insisted that the wedding should take place in the church.

"You know, Job, there is a different feeling now from what there was when you went away. Everybody wants to come. You'd better please them in that, I think."

"No, parson; I cannot be married there, nor can I ever go there again until righted formally and completely by the society. I am going to be married under the old oak, the only stanch, true friend, next to Bessie, I had the night I left."

So the old, friendly oak was chosen as the spot for the completion of his happiness.

The evening arrived. Everything was in readiness. Mrs. Caldwell had prepared a great feast for the neighborhood. The tables were spread out under the great arms of the oak, and they groaned under the weight of the homely, old-time fare.

Turkeys, chickens, plum-puddings, and the ever present wedding-cake, formed but a portion of the good things spread for jubilant Yarbtown. Chinese lanterns swung from the trees, and a huge bonfire brightened up the groves. It was a grand affair. The mistaken leaders of the church were there, and showed their repentance by their warm congratulations to the proud and happy couple.

Peggy Sproul was everywhere, cutting, carving, dishing out, finding good places for the crowds at the tables, stopping now and then to draw the corner of her apron up to her eyes to wipe away a tear, while she said to herself: "Oh, ter think that I should ha' ben the means uv puttin' off this happy day! Wal, wal—we all uv us make mustakes."

Job and Bessie were married just the same as all the rest of us. Under the old oak they repledged their love. The faithful old tree seemed to quiver with delight as a breeze swayed its branches, just as Bessie gave the modest "yes." It had the proud pleasure of witnessing the sealing of the secret contract, which it alone had been conscious of.

When the happy couple stepped to the carriage in waiting to convey them to the widow's, they found the horses taken out, and a crowd of men in front and behind.

"It's all right, old fellow, get in," said Sol. Williams, stepping up to Job.

They stepped in, and with a shout the procession started, shouting and singing the two hearts into their new life.

At the house the tables and chairs were full of the gifts from a friendly people. Peggy came in with a box. She set it down on the floor and throwing her arms around Bessie's neck, said:

"Can yer forgive me, child? An old woman's heart ez glad ter night ter see that her error hain't quite wrecked yer life. I wuz a gal onct, an' hed my day, too. I wuz all ready when the good Lud tuk him away f'me." Then the

poor woman broke down. "Here," she said, handing the box to Bessie, "here's all I've left uv all I got for *my* day; take it for your'n, an' think kindly uv poor Peggy." Bessie kissed Peggy, and opened the box.

It revealed an old-style tea set. Cups, saucers and plates, all colored and pictured, worthless for modern use, but Bessie felt the sacrifice the good old lady had made, and understood the motive. She leaned over Peggy's shoulder as she sat with her face buried in her hands, and whispered :

"You dear, good woman, I'll keep it ever to remember you by."

And so the bells went on ringing their merry chimes of love in Job's and Bessie's heart. They were on the borders of the golden land.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE WIND-UP.

Job was confined to his room in the hotel for several weeks. The fracture of his limb at this time was a sore trial. Everything was auguring success. They needed his advice and assistance at the new buildings. The factories were to be under his charge, and he wished to be on hand to see that everything was arranged properly for the commencement of business. He was almost tempted to doubt the sweetness of that revenge which "heaps coals of fire" on the enemy's head.

Simon Spud revealed the selfishness and meanness of his character, in a marvelous degree, in this affair. He quieted what little conscience he had, by paying to Job the smallest sum promised by him as a reward for saving the vouchers of his property; beyond that, he never troubled himself about Mr. Stearns. Job was not in need of any financial assistance; but it is rather pleasant to feel that one you have served has some sensation of gratitude.

Job recovered, however, and uniting himself, with all his capital and brains, to the new enterprise, made it a success. His poverty, sickness, and at one time, disgrace, are all forgotten now in the many cares of a prosperous business. Simon found himself one too many in Yarbtown, so he disposed of what little estate remained to him, and removed to a distant mining town in Nevada, where he now runs a whisky mill and poker game.

Peggy Sproul still lives, holding fast to her contracted, bigoted views, but with a good heart for all that.

Mrs. Caldwell runs the boarding-house now attached to the mill. She is a strong friend to Job, and has long ago atoned for her mistrust of his character.

Chinatown has been rebuilt, and smells worse than ever. The great question has never been satisfactorily settled by the Yarbtownites. They are still cursed with Chinese labor, Chinese morals, and probably will remain so until the great wheel of justice and law makes its revolution toward disposing of the question at issue.

A visitor to Yarbtown may still find the moral tone of young Yarbtown to be of rather a poor quality. He may still see scores of men sitting lazily in the bar-rooms, and wise men still ascribing their inactivity to their native indolence.

My story is told.

Yarbtown is a poorly represented type of many villages in California.

The stream of heathen men and women still comes pouring in, filling the places which should be occupied by the Caucasian race, poisoning the moral atmosphere, tainting society, undermining the free institutions of the country, degrading labor, and resisting quietly, but wisely and successfully, all efforts to remove them, or prevent their coming. Good people, what shall be done?


THE END

Almond Eyes

THE GREAT AGITATOR